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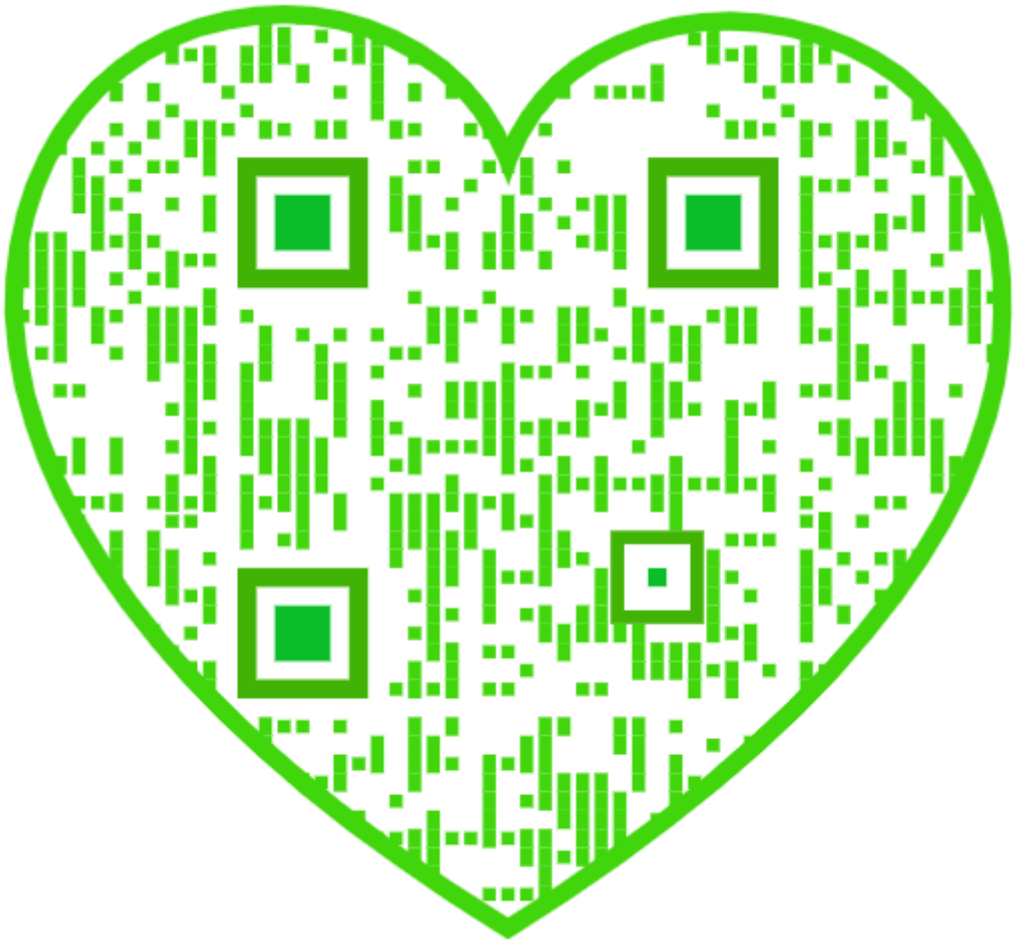

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Satin wood Cabinet: designed by Sir W. Chambers. R.A
Made by Shackleton and Taylor. Painted by W. Hamilton. R.A.

Frank Darling
2 Leader Lane
Toronto

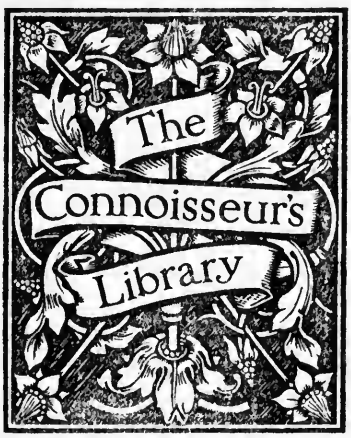
ENGLISH FURNITURE

May 1906

BY

FREDERICK S. ROBINSON

The Connoisseur's Library



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PREFACE

THE aim of this book is to be of some assistance to those who collect, or propose to collect, English furniture. The subjects of the plates, therefore, have been chosen mainly for the purpose of affording a good general view of the usual types with which a collector may meet. A false idea of English furniture would be formed if the majority of the objects reproduced were such as are seldom or never found for sale. At the same time, there are included many rare and beautiful pieces to demonstrate the artistic and technical skill of English designers and cabinetmakers. Mere reproductions of engravings from the pattern-books of Chippendale and his successors have been avoided. Though very full reference is made to their designs in the text, nothing has been admitted into the plates which is not taken from some existing piece of furniture. The illustrations are arranged at the end of the volume as nearly as possible in the order in which they are required for the elucidation of the text.

The grateful thanks of the author and publishers are due to all those who have so kindly given access to their collections, and allowed reproductions to be made from their treasures. Too numerous to mention here, their names will be found in the List of Illustrations, formed mainly for the purpose of recording them.

In the case of the many photographs of objects in the Victoria and Albert Museum, the author has to

acknowledge the courtesy of the officials in the Storekeeper's Department of the Board of Education.

Amongst those by whom valuable information has been given to the author, the names of Sir Charles Robinson, C.B., F.S.A., Mr. Albert Hartshorne, F.S.A., and Mr. J. E. Clifton, F.R.I.B.A., should be mentioned. His special thanks are also due to Mr. W. H. Bliss of Easton, Stamford, whose practical knowledge of cabinetmaking has been of great assistance.

The author hopes that the book may be of some use to those who are not already experienced in the study of English furniture.

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

WITH OCCASIONAL NOTES

(V. & A. M.=Victoria and Albert Museum)

I. CHAIR. Partly fifteenth century. One of a pair which were probably part of a set of stalls. Bere Regis Church, Dorset.

II. ARMOIRE, oak. Fifteenth century. York Minster.

Dimensions: Height 69, Length 58, Depth from front to back 12½ inches. By kind permission of the Dean.

III. CHEST, oak, twelfth or thirteenth century, decorated with iron. Brampton Church, Northants.

Approximate dimensions: Length 6 feet 5 inches, Width 19 inches, Depth 17½ inches.

IV. (1) CHEST, oak, end view. Open and showing flange on lid. Stoke d'Abernon Church, Surrey.
(2) The same closed.
(3) Front of the same.

Dimensions: Height 26, Length 48, Depth from front to back 18½ inches, approximately. By kind permission of the Rector.

V. CHEST, oak. Fifteenth century. As will be seen in the text, reasons are given why this chest may be of later date, and on further consideration I have not much doubt that it is of the fifteenth century. Dersingham Church, Norfolk.

By kind permission of the Rector.

VI. CHEST, oak. One of the scarce type of so-called 'Tilting Chests.' Subject, the same as Plate VII., but reversed. York Minster.

Dimensions: Height 36½, Length 74½, Depth from front to back 30 inches. By kind permission of the Dean.

VII. OAK PANEL, front of a chest, carved with a representation of the story of St. George and the Dragon. V. & A. M.

VIII. SPECIMENS OF THE S-CURVE.

(1) From the upper rail of a chest.
(2) Typical panel. S-curves opposed in pairs.
(3) Typical treatment: a small panel from a chair-back and a pilaster.
(4) Coarse version of S-curve.
(5) S-curve on the top of a chair-back.
(6) S-curve on the side of a chair-back—as a bracket.
(7) S-curves as they appear in Charles II. chairs.

IX. SPECIMENS OF SEMICIRCLE AND ARCH.

(1-4) Variants of the 'Semicircle Pattern.'
In (3) the pattern in the semicircles is known by some as the 'butterfly pattern.'
(5) The 'Planted Arch,' with a version of the 'upright leaf' on the pillars, and the S-curve on the stiles at each side.
(6) Planted arch, with S-curve on the pillars.
(7) The arch incised.

X. SPECIMENS—the GUILLOCHE and TYPICAL MOULDINGS.

(1) Guilloche, with a 'faggot'-shape between the circles.
(2) Variety of the guilloche.
(3) 'Guilloched quincunx' as a panel ornament.
(4) *a.* Dental course, ogee moulded.
b. 'Turned half-pendant,' applied.
c. Panel with plain guilloche—no small intervening circle.
(5) Typical moulding on edge of a stile; and flat panel. Stile in front of panel. Early part of the seventeenth century.
(6) Typical 'Bolection' moulding, *i.e.* moulding projecting in front of stile. Panel, 'raised

and splayed,' and in front of stile. Wren's mouldings, Hampton Court. End of seventeenth and early eighteenth century.

XI. INTERIOR OF CROSCOMBE CHURCH, SOMERSETSHIRE.
The nearer pews, fifteenth century. Pulpit, 1616.
By kind permission of the Rector.

XII. OAK PANEL. Late sixteenth century. Guilloche bordering, and 'cartouche'; lion's face missing. The 'cartouche' lies between the guilloche and the centre rectangle. The carving inside the rectangle is the mane of the missing lion mask. The property of the author.

XIII. (1) OAK PANELLING, with linen-fold pattern. Fifteenth century.
(2) TUDOR PANELS, with arms of the Blount family, showing linen-fold patterns. Oak. The left-hand panel is inscribed, 'Orate p[ro] bono statu Johãnis Blount et Johãne uxoris ei[s]' [ejus]. Sir Charles Robinson, C.B.
Size over all, 27⅜ inches each way. The outer mouldings are later.

XIV. PANELLING from a house at Waltham Abbey. Early sixteenth century. V. & A. M.

XV. OAK PANELLING, from Exeter. 1600 *circa*. V. & A. M.

XVI. PANELS from Sizergh Castle. Sixteenth century. Part of the 'Inlaid Room.' V. & A. M.

XVII. END OF A BEDSTEAD of oak, decorated with 'linen' pattern. First half of sixteenth century. V. & A. M.

XVIII. BEDSTEAD, oak. Dated 1593. The 'Courtenay bedstead.' V. & A. M.
Dimensions: Height 103½, Length 94, Breadth 68 inches.

XIX. BEDSTEAD, oak. Dated 1593. V. & A. M.

XX. (1) BEDSTEAD, oak. Seventeenth century.
Dimensions: Height 75¾, Length 80, Breadth 55 inches.
(2) Head of the same bedstead. The cornice has been restored. J. E. Clifton, Esq.

XXI. BEDSTEAD, oak. About 1640. Hangings of crimson velvet. Miss Evans. Forde Abbey.

XXII. (1) CRADLE, oak. Early seventeenth century. R. D. Radcliffe, Esq.
(2) CRADLE, oak. 1641. V. & A. M.
(3) CRADLE, oak. 1691. V. & A. M.

XXIII. CHEST of Prior Thomas Silksted. 1519. Oak, with new lid and plinth. Shanklin Church.
By kind permission of the Rector.

XXIV. CHEST, oak. Sixteenth century. Reasons are given in the text why this might be of the date given on the plate; but it is more probably of the fifteenth century. Cottingham Church, Northants.
Approximate dimensions: Length 5 feet 2 inches, Width 26 inches, extreme height 33 inches. By kind permission of the Rector.

XXV. COFFER, oak. First half of sixteenth century. The words 'coffer' and 'chest' may be regarded as synonymous, but 'chest' is preferable for anything but a really 'strong box.' V. & A. M.

XXVI. CHEST, oak. Late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. Seymour Lucas, Esq., R.A.
Dimensions: Length 41, Height 26, Depth from front to back 24 inches.

XXVII. INLAID 'NONESUCH CHEST.' Sixteenth century. Seymour Lucas, Esq., R.A.

XXVIII. (1) CHEST, inlaid oak. Early seventeenth century. Seymour Lucas, Esq., R.A.
(2) CHEST, oak, inlaid with geometrical marquetry. About 1600. From Bishopthorpe, York. V. & A. M.

XXIX. (1) CHEST, oak. In the lower part of the front are two doors. Early seventeenth century. V. & A. M.

(2) CHEST, oak. First half of seventeenth century. V. & A. M.

(3) CHEST, oak. 'This is Esther Hobsonne chist, 1637.' V. & A. M.

XXX. (1) END OF OAK CHEST, with ornamental panel.

(2) Front of the same, with S-curved rail. Seventeenth century. Sir Charles Robinson, C.B.

Dimensions: Length 43, Width 18½, Height 21½ inches.

XXXI. (1) CHEST, oak, seventeenth century, with what is described in the text as a species of anthemion ornament on the panels. Sir Charles Robinson, C.B.

Dimensions: Length 54, Width 22½, Height 24 inches.

(2) CHEST, oak, seventeenth century, with notched lower rail. Sir Charles Robinson, C.B.

Dimensions: Length 50, Width 20½, Height 27 inches.

XXXII. (1) CHEST, oak, with geometrical carving. Seventeenth century. Mrs. W. Rivers Turnbull.

Dimensions: Length 48, Height 24½, Depth from front to back 20½ inches.

(2) LATE LINEN-FOLD PANELLED CHEST. Seventeenth century. Seymour Lucas, Esq., R.A.

XXXIII. CHEST, cypress wood. Late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. This chest has dragon-headed S-curves similar to those found on Welsh furniture. It is very probably an imported Italian chest, with design to suit the English market, and more likely to be of the sixteenth century. V. & A. M.

Dimensions: Length 50⅝, Height 22½ inches approximately.

XXXIV. (1) CHEST, oak. Early seventeenth century. The Hon. Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane, K.C.B.

(2) CHEST, elm. About 1620. The Hon. Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane, K.C.B.

XXXV. CHEST, oak, inlaid. Early seventeenth century. V. & A. M.

Dimensions: Length 70, Height 33½, Depth from front to back 26½ inches.

XXXVI. (1) IRON CHEST, painted. Fifteenth century. At Rockingham Castle. The plinth is of wood, and later. The Rev. Canon Wentworth Watson.

(2) CHEST, oak, with incised arch. Seventeenth century. The Ven. Archdeacon Lightfoot.

XXXVII. PANELLING. Early sixteenth century. From a house at Waltham Abbey. V. & A. M.

XXXVIII. COURT CUPBOARD, oak, inlaid. 1603. Said to be from Derby Old Hall. V. & A. M.

Dimensions: Height 50½, Length 46¼, Depth from front to back 21½ inches.

XXXIX. CABINET, oak, inlaid. Late sixteenth century. Messrs. Gill and Reigate.

XL. YORKSHIRE CABINET, oak. About 1630. Mrs. C. Newton-Robinson.

Dimensions: Height 59, Breadth 73½, Depth from front to back 20½ inches.

XLI. YORKSHIRE CABINET, oak. About 1630. Miss Stirke.

Slightly smaller than its companion of Plate XL.

XLII. CABINET, oak, seventeenth century, from Cheshire. E. Hockliffe, Esq.

Dimensions: Height 67, Breadth 56⅝, Depth from front to back 20½ inches.

XLIII. (1) DRESSER, oak. Seventeenth century. Rev. F. Meyrick-Jones.

Length 60, Height 29, Depth from front to back 18½ inches.

(2) WELSH COURT CUPBOARD, oak. Late seventeenth century. Shows the 'raised and splayed' panel, and three tiers or stages. The property of the author.

Dimensions: Height 77¼, Breadth 54⅝, Depth from front to back 21⅛ inches.

(3) WELSH DRESSER, oak, inlaid with mahogany. Eighteenth century. The property of the author.

Dimensions: Height 89¼, Length 83⅜, Depth from front to back 19¼ inches.

XLIV. LIVERY CUPBOARD, oak. Early seventeenth century. Filled with loaves for public distribution every Sunday, in accordance with a charity founded by Robert Skelton in 1628. St. Albans Abbey.

By kind permission of the Dean.

XLV. (1) CABINET, oak. Seventeenth century. Sir Charles Robinson, C.B.

Dimensions: Height 27, Width 30½, Depth from front to back 24¼ inches.

(2) CABINET, oak, with bosses of black wood. Seventeenth century. V. & A. M.

XLVI. COIN CABINET, oak and cedar inlaid with rosewood. Seventeenth century. Mrs. Edmund McClure.

XLVII. CABINET, oak, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, etc. Seventeenth century. Messrs. Gill and Reigate.

XLVIII. CABINET, oak, showing 'turned half pendants' applied. Rev. F. Meyrick-Jones.

XLIX. (1) TABLE, oak, dated 1616, with arms of Thomas Sutton, founder of the Charterhouse Hospital.

Dimensions: Length 49⅛, Height 33½ inches approximately. By kind permission of the Master of the Charterhouse.

(2) TABLE, oak, first half of seventeenth century. St. Michael's Church, St. Albans.

L. (1) TABLE, oak, about 1620. At Forde Abbey. Miss Evans.

(2) GATE TABLE, oak. Seventeenth century. Derbyshire. V. & A. M.

Dimensions: Height 27¾, Breadth 38½ inches.

LI. 'DRAWING' TABLE, oak, inlaid. Late sixteenth century. V. & A. M.

LII. (1) TABLE, oak. Seventeenth century. E. Hockliffe, Esq.

Dimensions: Length 88¼, Height 31¼, Breadth 30⅞ inches.

(2) TABLE, oak, dated 1622. From Montacute Church. W. R. Phelips, Esq. Upon the table is a 'Bible' box, the property of Sir Thomas Wardle.

LIII. (1) CHAIR TABLE, oak. Seventeenth century. Sir Charles Robinson, C.B.

Dimensions: Height as chair 51½ inches, Width of seat 21½ inches, Length of table top 37 inches, Width 25 inches.

(2) TABLE, inlaid. About 1700. V. & A. M.

Dimensions: Height 31, Length 36, Breadth 31 inches.

LIV. (1) ARMCHAIR, oak, inlaid. Late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. V. & A. M.

(2) ARMCHAIR, oak, 1631. William and Sarah Wiggle. The top of back shows S-curves shaped as dragons. A. J. James, Esq.

(3) ARMCHAIR, oak. Early seventeenth century. 'Caqueteuse' shape. J. E. Clifton, Esq.
Dimensions: Height 51, Breadth 27, Depth from front to back 17¼ inches.

LV. (1) ARMCHAIR, oak. Seventeenth century. St. Michael's Church, St. Albans.
By kind permission of the Rector.

(2) ARMCHAIR, oak. 'I. P. 1670.' Shows flattened S-curves as top and side pieces. V. & A. M.
Dimensions: Height 53, Breadth 27 inches.

(3) ARMCHAIR, oak. Seventeenth century. Shows S-curves in an arch. V. & A. M.

LVI. (1) ARMCHAIR, child's, oak. Early seventeenth century. V. & A. M.
Dimensions: Height 40½, Breadth 19½ inches.

(2) ARMCHAIR, child's, oak. Early seventeenth century. V. & A. M.

(3) ARMCHAIR, child's, oak. Seventeenth century. From an old house at Stoke Albany, near Market Harborough. Mr. W. H. Bliss.

LVII. (1) SETTLE, oak. Seventeenth century. Sir Charles Robinson, C.B.
Dimensions: Length 70, Height 41½, Depth from front to back 23 inches.

(2) SETTLE, oak, and table combined.

(3) The same. Rev. F. Meyrick-Jones.
Dimensions: Length 54, Height as table 29½, Width 28¾ inches.

LVIII. (1) CHAIR, oak, seventeenth century, from Lancashire.

(2) CHAIR, oak, seventeenth century, from Lancashire.

(3) CHAIR, oak, seventeenth century, from Lancashire.

(4) CHAIR, oak, seventeenth century, from Lancashire. All in V. & A. M.

LIX. (1) CHAIR, oak. Seventeenth century. Derbyshire. V. & A. M.

Dimensions: Height 44½, Width 17¾ inches.

(2) CHAIR, oak. Seventeenth century. Derbyshire. V. & A. M.

(3) CHAIR, oak. Seventeenth century. Yorkshire. V. & A. M.

(4) CHAIR, oak. Seventeenth century. Derbyshire. V. & A. M.

LX. (1) CHAIR, oak. Early seventeenth century. With arms of Thomas Wentworth, first Earl of Strafford. This chair has been restored. V. & A. M.

(2) CHAIR, oak. Seventeenth century. V. & A. M.

(3) ARMCHAIR, oak. Late seventeenth century. Transitional from the old oak type to that of Charles II. Note the crown on top of back, and the extra cross-rail. Sir Charles Robinson, C.B.

Dimensions: Height 48, Width 21⅜, Depth from front to back 23 inches.

LXI. CHEST, oak, with drawers. Early seventeenth century. Inlaid, and with applied work. Seymour Lucas, Esq., R.A.

LXII. CHEST OF DRAWERS, oak. With tube handles on upper drawer. V. B. Crowther-Beynon, Esq.

LXIII. CHEST OF DRAWERS, oak. Late seventeenth century. V. & A. M.

Dimensions: Height 52½, Length 38, Depth from front to back 22 inches.

LXIV. CHEST, oak. Seventeenth century, on stand of late seventeenth century. Messrs. Waring.

LXV. CHEST, leather-covered. Late seventeenth century. V. & A. M.

Dimensions: Height 26¾, Length 38, Depth from front to back 22 inches.

LXVI. (1) CHAIR, oak, 1640 *circa*. Leather-backed and seated. Transitional from the Cromwellian type. V. & A. M.

Dimensions: Height 39, Breadth 18¾ inches.

(2) CHAIR, walnut. Late seventeenth century. V. & A. M.

(3) CHAIR, 1660 *circa*. Upholstered with stamped leather. At Rockingham Castle. Rev. Canon Wentworth Watson.

LXVII. (1) CHAIR, beech, 1650 *circa*. Sir Charles Robinson, C.B.

Dimensions: Height 49½, Breadth 17⅜ inches.

(2) CHAIR, walnut, 1660 *circa*. The Hon. Sir S. Ponsonby-Fane, K.C.B.

(3) CHAIR, walnut, 1660 *circa*. Forde Abbey. Miss Evans.

(4) AIR-PUMP of Robert Boyle, 1650 *circa*. The Royal Society.

LXVIII. (1) ARMCHAIR, oak, 1660 *circa*.

Dimensions: Height 46¼, Breadth 23⅜, Depth from front to back 24½ inches.

(2) CHAIR, oak, 1660 *circa*.

Dimensions: Height 43¾, Breadth 19¾, Depth from front to back 21⅝ inches.

(3) ARMCHAIR, oak, 1690 *circa*.

Dimensions: Height 51⅛, Breadth 26, Depth from front to back 26½ inches.

(4) ARMCHAIR, oak, 1690 *circa*. E. Hockliffe, Esq.

LXIX. (1) ARMCHAIR, oak. End of seventeenth century. Kingsbridge Church, Devon.

Height 51½ inches. By kind permission of the Vicar.

(2) CHAIR, walnut. Late seventeenth century. E. Hockliffe, Esq.

Dimensions: Height 49¼, Breadth 18½, Depth from front to back 19 inches.

(3) CHAIR, walnut, 1700 *circa*. Vincent J. Robinson, Esq.

LXX. (1) CHILD'S ARMCHAIR, oak, 1660 *circa*. Rockingham Castle. Rev. Canon Wentworth Watson.

(2) CHILD'S ARMCHAIR, walnut, 1660 *circa*. The property of the author.

Dimensions: Height 41¼, Breadth 14½, Depth from front to back 15¼ inches.

LXXI. (1) COUCH, oak, 1660 *circa*. V. & A. M.

(2) SETTEE, oak, 1660 *circa*. Painted and gilt. Upholstered in embossed and painted leather. Forde Abbey. Miss Evans.

LXXII. MIRROR FRAME, limewood. Grinling Gibbons, 1648-1721. V. & A. M.

Dimensions: Height 76, Breadth 57 inches.

LXXIII. (1) GILT MIRROR FRAME. Late seventeenth century. The property of the author.

Dimensions: Height 40½, Breadth 35⅝ inches.

(2) GILT MIRROR FRAME. Late seventeenth century. Sir Charles Robinson, C.B.

Dimensions: Height 54, Width 40½ inches.

LXXIV. TABLE. Grinling Gibbons, 1648-1721. Of small size, with new marble slab. Seymour Lucas, Esq., R.A.

LXXV. (1) MIRROR FRAME, oak, gilt. Early eighteenth century. Henry Willett, Esq. (the late).

(2) MIRROR FRAME, gilt. Early eighteenth century. W. H. Spottiswoode, Esq.

(3) MIRROR FRAME, gilt. Early eighteenth century. The Hon. Sir S. Ponsonby-Fane, K.C.B.

(4) MIRROR FRAME, gilt. Early eighteenth century. The Hon. Sir S. Ponsonby-Fane, K.C.B.

LXXVI. (1) TALL CLOCK, by Thomas Tompion. Burr walnut case. 1680 *circa*.

(2) TALL CLOCK, by Edward East, inlaid. 1680 *circa*.

(3) TALL CLOCK, by Joseph Knibb, veneered with laburnum and olive wood. 1690 *circa*.

(4) TALL CLOCK, by Christopher Gould, inlaid and carved in the style of Grinling Gibbons. 1700 *circa*. All four the property of D. A. F. Wetherfield, Esq.

LXXVII. (1) CABINET, inlaid. Late seventeenth century. Mrs. Edmund McClure.

(2) CABINET, inlaid. Late seventeenth century. Messrs. Partridge.

LXXVIII. CABINET, veneered. Late seventeenth century. The cupboard is fitted with shelves. The carcase is of oak, veneered with walnut. The figure and floral ornament is of pear-wood, inlaid with ebony. V. & A. M.

Dimensions: Height 81, Breadth 54, Depth from front to back 21½ inches.

LXXIX. (1) DWARF CHEST OF DRAWERS, veneered. Late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. Carcase of oak and pine. V. & A. M.

(2) KNEE-HOLE WRITING-TABLE, veneered and inlaid. Late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. Mrs. Collier.

LXXX. (1) CHEST OF DRAWERS on stand, walnut veneer. 1690-1710 *circa*. Messrs. Waring.

(2) CABINET on stand, oak. 1690-1710 *circa*. Within there are two shelves and three vertical partitions. Hon. Sir S. Ponsonby-Fane, K.C.B.

LXXXI. DRESSING-TABLE, veneered. Early eighteenth century. Made of oak, walnut, and pine, veneered with amboyna, kingwood, and rosewood. There is a secretaire with pigeon-holes and drawers. Below its sloping lid a large drawer has fourteen compartments. There are three drawers also at the sides. The stand contains a writing slide with a hinged flap. V. & A. M.

Dimensions: Height 60½, Breadth 19, Depth from front to back 14⅜ inches.

LXXXII. MIRRORS. Figs. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, mahogany gilt; fig. 2, gilt. Early eighteenth century. Mr. Stephen Neate.

LXXXIII. (1) ARMCHAIR. Late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. Messrs. Waring.

(2) CHAIR, heavy wood, species uncertain. Late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. Sir Charles Robinson, C.B.

Dimensions: Height 40, Breadth 20, Depth from front to back 20¼ inches.

(3) CHAIR, walnut inlaid. Late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. One of a set. Messrs. Partridge.

LXXXIV. TWO VIEWS OF A CHAIR, exotic wood. Early eighteenth century. J. Denham-Smith, Esq.

LXXXV. (1) ARMCHAIR, walnut wood. 1720-1730 *circa*. The back inlaid with a vase of flowers. Upholstered in crimson damask. V. & A. M.

Dimensions: Height 42, Breadth 24 inches.

(2) CHAIR, walnut wood. 1720-1730 *circa*. Lion masks on the top of the front legs. One of a set of sixteen. Messrs. Partridge.

(3) CHAIR, walnut wood. 1720-1730 *circa*. V. & A. M.

Dimensions: Height 40⅜, Breadth 23 inches.

LXXXVI. (1) CHAIR, maple. Early Georgian. W. R. Phelips, Esq.

(2) CHAIR, walnut. Early Georgian. The Earl of Ancaster.

(3) CHAIR, walnut. Early Georgian. V. & A. M.

(4) CHAIR, walnut. Early Georgian. Upholstered in French stamped leather. V. & A. M.

LXXXVII. (1) SETTEE, walnut veneer and walnut. Early eighteenth century. With lion masks, *en suite* with LXXXV. (2). Messrs. Partridge.

(2) SETTEE, walnut. First half of eighteenth century. The back is inlaid with vases of flowers. V. & A. M.

Dimensions: Height 42, Length 52 inches.

(3) SETTEE, walnut, veneered. First half of eighteenth century. V. & A. M.

Dimensions: Height 42¼, Length 50¼.

LXXXVIII. CABINET, mahogany. 1730 *circa*. One of a pair. Messrs. Partridge.

LXXXIX. CORNER CUPBOARD, mahogany. Pre-Chippendale. Early eighteenth century. This has a carved interior ceiling. Messrs. Gill and Reigate.

XC. BOOKCASE, mahogany. Chippendale. Henry Willett, Esq. (the late).

XCI. PRESS BEDSTEAD, style of Chippendale, mahogany. Mr. Stephen Neate.

XCII. (1) ARMCHAIR, mahogany. Chippendale. About 1745. Used by the Master of the Grocers' Company, and carrying their arms and badge. Upholstered in green morocco. The Worshipful Company of Grocers.

(2) ARMCHAIR, one of a pair, mahogany. First half of eighteenth century. V. & A. M.

XCIII. (1) CHIPPENDALE CHAIR, mahogany. J. E. Clifton, Esq.

Dimensions: Height 37, Breadth 21⅛, Depth from front to back 17 inches.

(2) CHIPPENDALE CHAIR, mahogany. T. Garmston Hyde, Esq.

XCIV. (1) CHAIR, riband-back, walnut. Chippendale (?). Edgar Willett, Esq.

(2) CHAIR, walnut. Chippendale. W. R. Phelips, Esq.

XCV. ARMCHAIR, riband-back, mahogany. Chippendale. The seat-cover is Italian. Seventeenth century. Lieutenant-Colonel G. B. C. Lyons.

XCVI. (1) CHAIRS, one of a pair of, mahogany. Chippendale. Seat embroidered in silks and wools. Lieutenant-Colonel G. B. C. Lyons.

(2) ARMCHAIR, mahogany. Chippendale. Messrs. Barker and Co.

XCVII. (1) CHAIR, mahogany. Chippendale. V. & A. M.

Dimensions: Height 38½, Breadth of seat 20½ inches.

(2) ARMCHAIR, mahogany. Chippendale. V. & A. M.

Dimensions: Height 39¼, Breadth 25¾ inches.

XCVIII. (1) EASY-CHAIR, upholstered mahogany. Chippendale. Mr. Stephen Neate.

(2) CHAIR, oval-back mahogany. Chippendale. Messrs. Barker and Co.

XCIX. SETTEE, mahogany fret-worked. Chippendale. The cover is modern. Lieutenant-Colonel G. B. C. Lyons.

C. (1) CHAIR, four-bar-backed mahogany. Chippendale. Mr. G. E. Hemmons.

(2) CHAIR, wheel-backed mahogany. Chippendale. Messrs. Partridge.

CI. (1) HALL-TABLE, oak. Chippendale. C. H. Talbot, Esq. Lacock Abbey.

(2) SIDE-TABLE in the Gothic style, mahogany. Chippendale. Messrs. Partridge.

CII. (1) SETTEE, mahogany. Chippendale. Henry Willett, Esq. (the late).

(2) SETTEE, mahogany. Chippendale. Designed by him for the Bury family of Kateshill, Bewdley. Mrs. Edmund McClure.

CIII. (1) TABLE, walnut, 1750 *circa*. Embroidery 1700 *circa*. Lieutenant-Colonel G. B. C. Lyons.

(2) TABLE, mahogany, 1760 *circa*. Sir Charles Robinson, C.B.

Dimensions: Height 24¼, Width of top 13¾ inches.

(3) POLE-SCREEN, mahogany, 1750. Embroidery earlier. Sir Charles Robinson, C.B.

Dimensions: Extreme height 57½, Height of screen 28½, Width 22½ inches.

CIV. (1) WHAT-NOT, mahogany. Chippendale. The Hon. Sir S. Ponsonby-Fane, K.C.B.

(2) WASHING-STAND, mahogany. Chippendale. W. Wontner, Esq.

CV. (1) SLAB-TABLE, mahogany. Messrs. Partridge.

(2) OCCASIONAL TABLE, mahogany. Chippendale. Messrs. Gill and Reigate.

CVI. SIDEBOARD TABLE, mahogany. Chippendale. Messrs. Partridge.

CVII. 'COMMODE TABLE,' mahogany, with gilt mouldings. Chippendale. H. Lowe, Esq.

CVIII. CLOTHES-PRESS, mahogany. Chippendale. Messrs. Barker and Co.

CIX. (1) CHIPPENDALE TALL-BOY, mahogany. Messrs. Gill and Reigate.

(2) CHIPPENDALE TALL-BOY, mahogany. Messrs. Gill and Reigate.

(3) HEPPELWHITE TALL-BOY, mahogany. Mr. Arthur Edwards.

CX. BREAKFAST-TABLE, mahogany. Chippendale. Sir Charles Robinson, C.B.

Dimensions: Height 27⅜, Length of top 36, Width 27 inches.

CXI. (1) TABLE, fretworked cluster-leg, mahogany. Chippendale. Mrs. C. W. Cobb.

(2) TABLE, cluster-leg, mahogany. Chippendale. Messrs. Barker and Co.

CXII. CABINET, mahogany, in the Chinese style. One of a pair. Sir Samuel Montague, Bart.

CXIII. TABLE and CHAIR, fret pattern, mahogany. Chippendale. Messrs. Waring.

CXIV. BEDSTEAD, mahogany. Chippendale. Messrs. Waring.

CXV. (1) MIRROR, wood, painted white. Chippendale. The Hon. Sir S. Ponsonby-Fane, K.C.B.

(2) MIRROR, pine frame, painted white. Chippendale. The Hon. Sir S. Ponsonby-Fane, K.C.B.

(3) MIRROR, gilt. Chippendale. Mr. Stephen Neate.

(4) MIRROR, gilt, Chippendale. Mr. Stephen Neate.

CXVI. (1) CLOCK, Chippendale style, mahogany. F. Hockliffe, Esq.

(2) CLOCK, Chippendale style, mahogany. Mr. Arthur Edwards.

CXVII. SIDEBOARD TABLE, mahogany, 1780 *circa*. Sir Samuel Montague, Bart.

CXVIII. SIDEBOARD TABLE. Adam. 1760-1780 *circa*. Mrs. W. Rivers Turnbull.

Dimensions: Length 82, Height 34½, Depth from front to back 28½ inches.

CXIX. (1 and 3) PEDESTALS and URNS, mahogany. Adam.

(2) SIDEBOARD TABLE, mahogany. Adam, 1760-1780 *circa*. These are *en suite*, the pedestals and urns being photographed on a larger scale than the table to which they belong. Messrs. Gill and Reigate.

CXX. (1) CARD-TABLE, mahogany. Adam (?). Sir Charles Robinson, C.B.

Dimensions: Length 36, Height 28⅛, Width closed 17⅜ inches.

(2) MIRROR, style of Adam, gilt. The Hon. Sir S. Ponsonby-Fane, K.C.B.

CXXI. LYRE-BACKED CHAIR, mahogany. One of a set. Adam (?). Augustus Spencer, Esq.

CXXII. (1) ARMCHAIR, mahogany. Adam, about 1780. Henry Willett, Esq. (the late).

(2) ARMCHAIR, gilt. Adam, 1780 *circa*. The Earl of Ancaster.

(3) ARMCHAIR, mahogany. Adam, about 1780. Miss Evans. Forde Abbey.

CXXIII. SIDEBOARD, mahogany, inlaid. E. B. Wanton, Esq.

Dimensions: Length 87, Height 36, Depth from front to back 34 inches.

CXXIV. COMMODE, mahogany, veneered and inlaid. Augustus Spencer, Esq.

CXXV. CHEST OF DRAWERS and TOILET-GLASS, mahogany. Heppelwhite.

Dimensions: the chest of drawers, inlaid, is in Height 46, Breadth 45½, Depth from front to back

23⅜ inches. Sir Charles Robinson, C.B. The toilet-glass, with ivory handles, etc., is in Height 22, Breadth 16⅛, Depth from front to back 8 inches. Gerald Robinson, Esq.

CXXVI. TABLE, painted and gilt. The top is decorated with a fan-shaped ornament in the centre, medallions with female figures and an urn, and a broad band of festooned flowers. V. & A. M.

Dimensions: Height 32, Length 45¾, Breadth 20¾ inches.

CXXVII. CARD-TABLE, walnut, inlaid top. About 1780. Henry Willett, Esq. (the late).

CXXVIII. BOOKCASE, mahogany. Messrs. Waring.

CXXIX. KNIFE-CASE, one of a pair, inlaid with various coloured woods. Heppelwhite (?). V. & A. M.

Height 18¾ inches.

CXXX. (1) SHIELD-BACK CHAIR, mahogany. Heppelwhite. Henry Willett, Esq. (the late).

(2) CHAIR, mahogany. Heppelwhite. Sir Charles Robinson, C.B.

Dimensions: Height 36½, Width 21 inches.

(3) SHIELD-BACK CHAIR, mahogany. Heppelwhite. Henry Willett, Esq. (the late).

CXXXI. (1) SHIELD-BACK ARMCHAIR, mahogany. Heppelwhite. Henry Willett, Esq. (the late).

(2) SHIELD-BACK ARMCHAIR, mahogany. Heppelwhite. W. H. Spottiswoode, Esq.

(3) SHIELD-BACK ARMCHAIR, mahogany. Heppelwhite. Henry Willett, Esq. (the late).

CXXXII. (1) SHIELD-BACK ARMCHAIR, walnut. Heppelwhite. V. & A. M.

(2) SHIELD-BACK CHAIR, walnut. Heppelwhite. V. & A. M.

CXXXIII. (1) CHEST CABINET, satin-wood veneer. Sheraton. The Earl of Ancaster;
and TEA-TRAY, mahogany, inlaid. V. & A. M.

(2) WORKBOX, satin-wood, with mahogany top, inlaid. Sheraton. W. H. Spottiswoode, Esq.;
and WORK-TABLE, satin-wood inlaid with ebony. Sheraton. The Earl of Ancaster.

CXXXIV. (1) PEMBROKE TABLE, mahogany inlaid. Late Sheraton. Mrs. C. W. Cobb.

(2) WORKBOX ON STAND, satin-wood veneered and inlaid. Sheraton. James Orrock, Esq.

(3) TABLE, mahogany bordered with satin-wood. Sheraton. The Earl of Ancaster.

CXXXV. (1) WORK-TABLE, satin wood painted with black stripes. Sheraton. The Earl of Ancaster.

(2) TRIPOD READING-TABLE, mahogany. Late Sheraton. J. E. Clifton, Esq.

Dimensions: Height of stand 27¾, Length of top 16½, Depth from front to back 14 inches.

(3) TABLE, walnut inlaid. Late Sheraton. C. H. Talbot, Esq. Lacock Abbey.

CXXXVI. (1) LYRE-BACK ARMCHAIR, mahogany. Sheraton. V. & A. M.

(2) ARMCHAIR. One of a pair, mahogany. Sheraton. The property of the author.

Dimensions: Height 36 , Breadth 22¼, Depth from front to back 21½ inches.

CXXXVII. (1) ARMCHAIR, of beech, painted dark green and gilt. On the back a trophy of musical instruments, a group of flowers and bands of floral ornament. The painting has been restored. V. & A. M.
Dimensions: Height 33¼, Breadth 22⅛, Depth from front to back 18¾ inches.

(2) ARMCHAIR, painted and gilt. Mr. G. E. Hemmons.

(3) ARMCHAIR, of beech, painted and gilt. Sheraton. V. & A. M.

(4) ARMCHAIR, of beech, painted and gilt. Sheraton. V. & A. M.

CXXXVIII. ARMCHAIR, satin-wood, painted. Sheraton. Sir Samuel Montague, Bart.

CXXXIX. (1) SIDEBOARD, mahogany inlaid. Sheraton. Mr. Stephen Neate.

(2) SIDEBOARD, mahogany inlaid. Late Sheraton. Messrs. Waring.

(3) SIDEBOARD, mahogany inlaid. Sheraton, middle period. Messrs. Waring.

CXL. SIDEBOARD, mahogany inlaid. Sheraton. Augustus Spencer, Esq.

CXLI. CARD-TABLE, satin-wood inlaid. Sheraton. Sir Samuel Montague, Bart.

CXLII. TABLE, satin-wood inlaid. Sheraton. Sir Samuel Montague, Bart.

CXLIII. CARD-TABLE, rosewood, inlaid. V. & A. M.
Dimensions: Height 30¾, Top square open 31 inches.

CXLIV. (1) TOP OF TABLE, satin-wood painted. Sheraton.

(2) THE TABLE ENTIRE. Sir Samuel Montague, Bart.

CXLV. DRESSING-TABLE, satin-wood painted. Sheraton (?). V. & A. M.

CXLVI. CABINET with its top, satin-wood, inlaid and painted. Sheraton. Late eighteenth century. V. & A. M.

CXLVII. CABINET, cedar veneered with satin-wood and inlaid. Sheraton. One of a pair. The inlay is of root of walnut. Within the folding doors are drawers and partitions, and a folding shelf which draws out. V. & A. M.

Dimensions: Height 40½, Breadth 18½, Depth from front to back 12 inches.

CXLVIII. COMMODE. One of a pair. Satin-wood veneer inlaid. Sheraton. Miss Vincent.

Dimensions: Length 58, Height 36, Depth from front to back 24 inches.

CXLIX. CABINET, satin-wood inlaid, with ormolu mounts. Sheraton. H. Willett, Esq. (the late).

Dimensions: Height 72, Breadth 54, Depth from front to back 27 inches, approximately.

CL. BOOKCASE, satin-wood, mounted with ormolu and Wedgwood medallions. Messrs. Partridge.

CLI. BUREAU BOOKCASE, mahogany painted. Sheraton. Late eighteenth century. Vincent J. Robinson, Esq.

CLII. BUREAU BOOKCASE, satin-wood. Sheraton. Mr. Stephen Neate.

CLIII. (1) TOILET-TABLE, satin-wood inlaid with walnut, Sheraton. The interior fittings include a mirror. The Earl of Ancaster.

(2) CABINET WASHSTAND, mahogany. Sheraton. Opens at the top and in front with flaps and doors. W. H. Spottiswoode, Esq.

(3) CABINET TOILET-STAND, mahogany. Sheraton. Decorated with inlay of shell ornament, floral wreaths, and foliated scrolls. It opens with two flaps and is fitted with a folding mirror, recesses, and drawers. W. H. Spottiswoode, Esq.

CLIV. (1) CABINET, satin-wood, inlaid and painted. Sheraton—or Heppelwhite. The upper part, a cupboard with two doors, has elliptical panels painted with muses on a black ground. The two top drawer fronts turn down to form a writing-table, with small drawers and cupboard at the back. The front of each drawer is bordered with tulip-wood. James Orrock, Esq.

(2) WRITING-TABLE, satin-wood inlaid with ebony. Sheraton. The top of the table is a flap which folds over and is covered with leather within. The Earl of Ancaster.

CLV. SIDEBOARD CLOCK, mahogany, with brass-fretted panel enclosing an oval painting in the style of Angelica Kauffmann. C. K. Morris, Esq. (the late).
Height about three feet.

CLVI. CABINET, principally pear-tree inlaid. Late sixteenth century or early seventeenth century. The upper part is perhaps South German, the lower possibly English. V. & A. M.

CLVII. CABINET, satin-wood veneered, with paintings. Messrs. Partridge.
Dimensions: Height 108, Breadth 72, Depth from front to back 36 inches.

CLVIII. (1) ARMCHAIR, rosewood, 1800 *circa*. Rev. H. V. le Bas.

(2) HALL CHAIR, mahogany, 1800 *circa*. C. H. Talbot, Esq. Lacock Abbey.

(3 and 4) CHAIRS, late Sheraton, mahogany inlaid with brass. These may be by the firm of Gillow. Mr. W. H. Bliss.

CLIX. (1) CLOCK, lacquered in Japanese style. Eighteenth century. C. K. Morris, Esq. (the late).

(2) WARDROBE, lacquered perhaps in Japan and made up in England. Eighteenth century. Sir Charles Robinson, C.B.

Dimensions: Height 67½, Breadth 32⅝, Depth from front to back 21⅞ inches.

CLX. (1) WINDSOR CHAIR, yew, Gothic style. Mr. W. H. Bliss.

(2) CHAIR, wood painted green. Eighteenth century. This is said to have belonged to Oliver Goldsmith, and to have been bequeathed by him, in 1774, to his physician, Dr. Hawes. V. & A. M.

Height 37¾.

A SHORT LIST OF BOOKS

USEFUL FOR THE STUDY OF ENGLISH FURNITURE

For the Periods before 1700

* HENRY SHAW, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture*, 1836. Has fine steel-engraved plates and an admirable introduction by Sir S. Meyrick, but contains nothing later than 1700. Price perhaps £3. Out of print.

FRED ROE, *Ancient Coffers and Cupboards.* An exhaustive treatise upon early church chests, armoires, etc., beautifully illustrated with photographs and drawings by the author. Contains nothing later than the end of the fifteenth century. Published by Methuen and Co., 1903. Price £3, 3s.

* J. HUNGERFORD POLLEN, *Catalogue of Furniture and Woodwork in the South Kensington Museum.* Treats of all countries, and would be invaluable if it had been kept up to date. Published 1874, 21s.

* The introduction is reprinted as one of the South Kensington Handbooks on 'Furniture.' A few woodcuts in the cheaper form, to which good full-page etchings are added in the large-paper edition. Cheap paper edition, 1s.

* By the same, *Catalogue of the Special Loan Exhibition of English Furniture at Bethnal Green*, 1896. Is to be had at the bookstall of the Victoria and Albert Museum. 1s. 6d.

* F. LITCHFIELD, *History of Furniture.* Covers the entire ground, and necessarily dismisses English furniture in a few chapters. Contains useful information and numerous illustrations.

PARKER'S *Glossary of Gothic Architecture*, three vols., gives an excellent article upon early church chests, and is invaluable for all casual architectural reference in the Gothic periods. About £3.

VIOLLET LE DUC, *Dictionnaire du Mobilier*, three vols., profusely illustrated, and useful for comparative study in the Gothic periods. A somewhat expensive work.

* E. DE CHAMPEAUX, *Le Meuble*, two volumes in a cheap French series on the various arts ('Bibliothèque de l'enseignement des Beaux-Arts,' Quantin), deals with the whole history of French furniture, has numerous though rather small illustrations, and is extremely useful for comparative study.

* W. BLISS SANDERS, *Half-timbered Houses and Carved Oakwork*, 1883. A thin folio, has a useful introduction and good drawings of English furniture not later than 1700. Price about 30s.

* J. W. HURRELL, *Measured Drawings of Old English Oak Furniture.* A very useful collection of measured plans and elevations, with full details of old oak furniture of sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, mostly to be found in Lancashire and Staffordshire. A recently published work. Batsford, £2, 2s.

* W. SMALL, a similar work on *Scottish Woodwork of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Quaritch, 1878, with many details full size, is of interest. A thin folio, out of print; price about £1, 15s. for a second edition dated 1898.

* E. CHANCELLOR, a large quarto of outline drawings of furniture, chiefly from specimens in the Victoria and Albert Museum. This contains a good many chairs, and supplements Mr. Hurrell's book, which chiefly deals with tables, cabinets, and chests. Batsford, £1, 5s.

RICHARDSON'S *Studies from Old English Mansions* contains many lithographic reproductions of old oak furniture. An expensively produced work, out of print.

For the Eighteenth Century

THOMAS CHIPPENDALE, *The Gentleman and Cabinet-maker's Director*, three editions, 1754, 1759, 1762. This is the only book of designs published by Chippendale, and the sole documentary evidence as to his style. A fine folio, with many copper-plate engravings in line. Rare, price about £12.

ROBERT MANWARING, *The Cabinet and Chair Maker's Real Friend and Companion*, thin octavo, 1765.

By the same, *The Chair-Maker's Guide*, octavo.

'*Genteel Household Furniture in the Present Taste*, ... by a Society of Upholsterers, Cabinetmakers, etc.' In four parts, each entitled 'Upwards of One Hundred New and Genteel Designs, being all the most Approved Patterns of Household Furniture.' Of this work the first twenty-eight plates reproduce the plates of chairs in Manwaring's *Chair-Maker's Guide*. On the whole the designs resemble Chippendale's. These three works with which Manwaring had to do are much less expensive productions than Chippendale's folio. Rare.

INCE and MAYHEW, *The Universal System of Household Furniture*, undated. A fine folio

addressed to a French and English public. Designs of furniture in the style of Chippendale. Rare.

THOMAS SHEARER, *Cabinetmaker's London Book of Prices*, 1788. Plates by Shearer and Heppelwhite.

A. HEPPELWHITE, *The Cabinetmaker and Upholsterer's Guide or Repository of Designs for every Article of Household Furniture.* A fine quarto, three editions, 1788, 1789, 1794. All rare, costing £8 to £12.

THOMAS SHERATON, *Designs for Furniture*, undated. 84 large folio plates. *The Cabinetmaker and Upholsterer's Drawing-Book*, 1791, with Accompaniment and Appendix within the next two years. This book, a quarto with 111 plates, contains Sheraton's best work. Second edition, 1793-6, 119 plates; third, 1802, 122 plates. All expensive, from £10 to £12.

* A reprint of the third edition, undated, has been published by Mr. B. T. Batsford.

The Cabinet Dictionary: an Explanation of all Terms used in the Cabinet, Chair, and Upholstery Branches, one volume in fifteen parts, 1803.

The Cabinetmaker and General Artist's Encyclopædia, a folio to be completed in 125 parts, but only 30 were published, 1804. This contains much general information, but shows Sheraton at his worst as a furniture designer. Very crude coloured plates.

* Many designs of Chippendale, Heppelwhite, and Sheraton have been well reproduced in a volume by J. Munro Bell, without any letterpress, 1900. About £2.

J. ALDAM HEATON, in an expensive folio publication, gives reproductions of 'Furniture and Decoration' of the eighteenth century in general. He includes Chippendale, Heppelwhite, Adam, and Sheraton, and has made a good selection from their designs. His introductory remarks are useful.

* T. A. STRANGE has published at 12s. 6d. a volume replete with many hundreds of designs borrowed from all sources of 'English Furniture and Woodwork during the Eighteenth Century.' This book, if it had been properly edited, would be an invaluable encyclopædia of furniture, though the drawings are often on a very small scale. As it is, the number of its plates renders it very useful. The same author has published a companion book on French furniture.

* K. WARREN CLOUSTON, in *The Chippendale Period in English Furniture*, a quarto volume with many excellent illustrations from line drawings published by Messrs. Debenham and Freebody, treats the whole period of the eighteenth century. A most useful work.

* FRANCIS CLARY MORSE, *Furniture of the Olden Time*. Treats of American furniture of the eighteenth century. A useful, well-arranged handbook, profusely illustrated from photographs. Macmillan, 1903, 12s. 6d.

Miss SINGLETON, *Furniture of our Forefathers*. Similar in object to the foregoing, but in two large octavo volumes. Illustrated with photographs and line drawings of American furniture of the eighteenth century. Gives much information about prices from old inventories. Batsford, 1901; £3, 15s.

An asterisk is attached to those books which are at once most useful and most within the reach of the

student. The Victoria and Albert Museum special catalogue of books referring to furniture will be found of great utility. Hitherto no book has been published to cover the whole field of English furniture at any length, but Mr. Percy Macquoid's *A History of English Furniture*, now being published, bids fair to do so for all except the earliest period, with which Mr. Fred Roe has dealt. It is to be completed in twenty parts, 7s. 6d. each, of which five already constitute the first volume, entitled *The Age of Oak*. The illustrations are very numerous and good. Lawrence and Bullen.

A few small and cheap recently published works are—

Eighteenth Century Furniture, by Miss CONSTANCE SIMON. Lawrence and Bullen. 25s.

Chats on Old Furniture, by ARTHUR HAYDEN. T. Fisher Unwin.

Various articles upon the English Furniture-Makers of the eighteenth century which have appeared or are appearing in the *Connoisseur Magazine* and the *Burlington Magazine*, by R. SCOTT CLOUSTON.

ENGLISH FURNITURE

CHAPTER I

FROM SAXON TO LATE GOTHIC

THE writer of a treatise upon English Furniture, who wishes to trace his subject from the very commencement of its history, is attended at once by a serious difficulty. Lack of actual material, owing to the limited durability of woodwork as compared with that of metal and stone, absolutely precludes all certainty as to the shape and adornment of Saxon, Danish, or Norman chairs, beds, and tables. Their non-existence may be regarded either as a blessing or a curse. The collector's loss is the speculative antiquary's opportunity. The former, from whose point of view this book is written, is not much concerned with what he can never hope to see or obtain. To the latter, then, let us leave the privilege of 'embarking,' as a recent writer on the Saxon period has it, 'on the perilous sea of conjecture surrounding the small solid spots of knowledge which . . . we possess.'

A brief study of the manner in which a Saxon house is represented in one of the most useful historical documents will show how difficult it is to draw exact inferences as to its contents. In the Bayeux so-called 'tapestry' Harold's house at Bosham is depicted. We cannot tell from such a picture what it really looked like, because the front is entirely open to display the feasting in progress within. The figures in the house are cut off at the waist by the floor of the upper story.

The only definite conclusion to be drawn as to other things besides dress and architecture, of which the latter is but symbolically recorded, concerns horns and drinking-cups. They are unmistakable, but in this particular picture of a feast, at any rate, there are no tables, chairs, or furniture of any kind. Mr. Baldwin Brown, however (*Arts in Early England*, i. p. 103), gathers from inventories and records that the equipment of a Saxon lord's house 'gave occasion for art in the figured wall-hanging, and in carved and gilded woodwork in furniture and utensil.' The plentiful remains of beautifully executed Saxon metal-work warrant such a conclusion, and a reference by the same writer to the chronicle of Ramsey Abbey (Rolls Series, 83) brings us a step nearer to our subject. It records that the church, originally built in 974, was soon adorned with a jewelled altar-front of silver, and an organ with pipes of copper. There is, in fact, no doubt that the pre-Norman house, monastery, and church must have been suitably furnished with a skill worthy of that which we can see actually displayed in the remains of metal-work. Many of the examples preserved show a technical skill of the highest order in all except figure-work. Seeing, then, that unfortunately no remains of Saxon furniture have come down to us, and that most representations of it, whether on textile fabrics or in manuscripts, are of so plain a description as to leave us no very definite ideas, the illustrations of this book will be confined to actual existing objects, leaving aside all exemplifications of what may have been.

There is in the British Museum a most precious relic which may give us a clue to realise the probable skill in wood-carving before the Norman period. It is the casket in whale's bone presented by Sir A. W. Franks. The cover represents a man defending his house with a bow—drawn, be it noticed, to the waist,

and not as our later archers drew it—against opponents with swords and shields. The subject on the cover only takes up about one-third of the space. There is a round disc in the centre to which a handle was probably once attached. The front shows one Weland Smith mounting a young prince's skull as a drinking-cup; with Egil his brother; and the adoration of the Magi. A twisted rope pattern runs round the border between straight lines raised upon a field which has been cut away. There is a place for a lock. On the back is represented the taking of Jerusalem, the central shape being an arch with pillars broken or interrupted by horizontal pieces in three stories. On the sides is an episode from the Teutonic legend of Egil the archer, a prototype of William Tell. There are Runic inscriptions in the Northumbrian dialect. It is said that this object is of the eighth century, and was formerly preserved in Auvergne. The missing portions are in the Bargello at Florence. The material, whale's bone, is dullish white in colour, like coarse ivory, and with a decided grain. It is easy to imagine that the Saxon oak chest was carved with a front similar in execution to this, naïve and flat, but so well incised and definite as to have a peculiar attractiveness. The doorway of the house on the cover, which is represented in elevation (whereas the house itself is fantastically given in ground plan), is of very similar proportion and general appearance to the round arches and pillars on the chests and chimney-pieces and other furniture of the Elizabethan period. A twisted cable ornament runs up the pillars, suggesting the 'guilloche' which we shall find so common in the period of the Renaissance.

A Saxon or Anglo-Norman state bed, illustrated from a manuscript in Willemin's *Monumens Français inédits*, has thick carved legs of a very similar type to the baluster legs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Needless to say that we do not find the exact

acanthus-leaf lower part and the gadrooned upper portion which are so entirely characteristic of Elizabethan and Jacobean beds. It is a matter rather of general shape and feeling than of detail. If manuscript delineations of the Saxon house are to be trusted,—and the usual type is of one story and one room—we are compelled to believe that its appurtenances must, generally speaking, have been made more for use than for show. The *meuble d'apparat* was not characteristic of the Saxon period. A heavy table, upon which the inhabitants of the house and guests also slept, an occasional four-post bed for the mistress of the house, enclosed in a shed with a separate roof, and benches, some with lions' or other heads at the corners, with backs for the lord and lady of the house, are all that Mr. J. H. Pollen in his *Furniture and Woodwork* allows to the rank and file. Crosslegged thrones, something like that problematical one of Dagobert in the Musée des Souverains at Paris, of which there is a cast in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and folding chairs of various forms more or less from classical types, he allots to great personages. Benches and chests served as beds likewise, the bedding being kept inside; and considerable use was made of textile fabrics to cover furniture and keep out draughts. If we take it for granted with Mr. Pollen that candles in houses 'were stuck anywhere on beams and ledges,' the practice throws a light upon the amount of comfort and cleanliness which our forefathers enjoyed.

The Norman Conquest may be taken as an epoch of advance in comfort and refinement. Perhaps the one-roomed house would cease to be anything but the shelter of the poor, and, as soon as there was space to fill, things must have been made to fill it. The Jews' House at Lincoln, however, one of the few remaining dwelling-houses of Norman architecture in England,

and said to be of the early twelfth century, appears to have contained but two rooms. As yet the house would be one of unglazed windows and short of chimneys. The fire in the chief room would be in the centre of the floor. At Penshurst, Kent, in the hall, may still be seen the centrally placed hearth of a house as late as the fourteenth century. The smoke escapes by an opening in the roof. The old 'louvre' of the central fireplace may be noticed on the roof of the hall of Lincoln College, Oxford, but the fire has long been burning up a chimney.[1]

Tables now were placed upon trestles, and cupboards or armoires (*armaria*) came into use with decorative iron hinges worked into scrolls and leafage. No such thing as a piece of Norman furniture exists in England. It is, therefore, rather idle to waste space upon the matter, except to deprecate the theory that prior to 1250 furniture owed all its decoration to painting and ironwork. With Norman stone carvings remaining, it seems rather unreasonable to conjecture that there were no carvings in wood. The theory is not, at any rate, supported by a unique example which exists in France. This is an armoire at Aubazine, Corrèze, illustrated by Mr. Fred Roe in his *Ancient Coffers and Cupboards*. Dating from the twelfth or thirteenth century, it has ends with round arches and Vandyke patterns of typical Norman character, with slender pillars and capitals. Its wooden decoration, therefore, is considerably more effective than that of such a celebrated relic as the thirteenth century chest at Stoke d'Abernon, which is illustrated in this volume (Plate IV.). It would be rather illogical to imagine that examples made, say, a generation or two before the date of this armoire should have been practically uncarved with ornament.

[1] Small houses lacked chimneys 'in most uplandish towns' as late as the early sixteenth century. See Harrison's *Description of England*, 1577, 'On the Manner of Building and Furniture of our Houses.'

This armoire, however, is very late Norman. Earlier manuscript illustrations, such as those of the ninth century, afford us still only the toy houses, plain beds, and bird's-eye views of fortified places similar to the ground plan of the Northumbrian casket. A tenth century manuscript shows us a semi-circular table supported on many-folding trestles and covered with a cloth. In the Bayeux needlework William I. sits on a seat apparently without a back. Its front legs end at the top in dogs' heads, and it has dogs' feet. On his seal he is represented as occupying a still plainer throne without back or dogs' heads, but apparently cushioned. The seal of Richard Cœur de Lion shows us that king seated on a low-backed throne, the side wings of which have Gothic ornaments of trefoil and fleur-de-lys, but the representation is too devoid of perspective for us to be able to draw much information from it. With his successor John we are supposed, at last, to emerge from the arid tract of an unrepresented period. There remains at Rockingham Castle a chest known locally as 'King John's money-box,' which is of oak covered with hammered iron plates and hinges. It has a domed top, and is practically a strong-box without much ornament.[1]

There exist, it should be said, a good many rough chests without decoration, and either of wood or bound with iron, for which a Saxon origin is claimed. Receptacles made apparently out of the hollowed trunk of a tree, and with rounded tops, may indeed be of great age, but there is very little intrinsic evidence to prove it, and their want of artistic merits claims for them only the passing attention due to mere curiosities. It is almost as difficult to date the iron-bound ones unless there are special characteristics to be discerned in the locks and hinges.

With the first half of the thirteenth century we happily arrive at a period of historical documents directly relating to our subject, and consequently of

[1] It is probably not of the period of King John.

much greater importance than the manuscript and other illustrations from which can be drawn but modest inferences. Sir Samuel Meyrick, in his introduction to Shaw's *Specimens of Ancient Furniture*, has gathered these extracts from the Close Rolls together. He confines himself to domestic furniture and decoration entirely. In the year 1233 the sheriff is ordered by King Henry III. to take care that the wainscotted chamber (*cameram lambruscatam*; French '*lambris*') in the castle of Winchester be painted with the same histories and pictures as those with which it had been previously painted. We gather from this that walls were, if not panelled, at any rate covered with wood; and secondly, that the custom of painting them with subjects from romance, legends, or the *fabliaux* of the time, was in use before 1233.

In 1236 the king's treasurer is commanded 'to have the great chamber of the king at Westminster painted with good green colour in imitation of a curtain, and in the great gable of the same chamber, near the door, to have painted the following game, *Qui ne donne ce qu'il tient, ne prend ce qu'il désire*, and also the little wardrobe of the king to have painted with green colour in the fashion of a curtain.'

The representation of a curtain is the precursor of the actual and movable tapestry hanging. By the motto called a 'game' is probably implied a maxim or favourite quotation in some round game popular at the time.[1]

Another order of 1239 commands that money be paid 'for oil varnish and colours, and for making pictures in the chamber of our queen at Westminster. . . .' If we may infer from this that there the paintings were in oil colours, it is unnecessary to defer the date of their use in England until the invention, whatever it may have been, of H. Van Eyck. In his book upon

[1] 'The chamber and its paintings were wholly destroyed after the fire of 1834.' See the article by Mr. W. R. Lethaby in the *Burlington Magazine*, July 1905.

Ancient Coffers and Cupboards, Mr. Fred Roe has illustrated a coffer from Newport Church, Essex, dating from the thirteenth century, the painting of which, he says, 'proves conclusively that oil was used as a vehicle in England at this early period. It may be regarded as the earliest national specimen of that art remaining.'

An order of 1252 shows that coloured glass was used in such places as the castle of Northampton, and was not confined to ecclesiastical buildings. Henry III. orders the sheriff of Nottingham 'to have painted in the chamber of our queen at Nottingham the history of Alexander round about it.' Again, in 1260, the king's pictures at Windsor are to be restored, and the sheriff of Surrey is commanded to repair those 'in our great hall at Guldeford, and in our great chamber there, on the blank wall at the head of our bed, to have painted the resemblance of a curtain or hanging.' From this we learn the persistence of an evil fashion, and the fact that bedrooms were ornamented besides great halls.

Subjects from contemporary history appear, besides legends. Langton, Bishop of Lichfield, commanded in 1312 the coronation, marriages, wars, and funeral of his patron Edward I. to be painted in the great hall of his new palace; and Symeon, a friar and doctor in theology, in an itinerary of 1322, mentions that near 'this monastery' (Westminster Abbey) 'is the royal palace of England in which is that well-known chamber on whose walls all the warlike histories of the Bible are painted with inexpressible skill, and explained by a regular series of texts beautifully written in French over each battle. . . .'

From these extracts we derive a more definite notion of the furnishing of the walls of a room. We learn that they were wainscotted and painted—probably in oil colours. Considerable sums were paid for this painting, but we must agree with Horace Walpole that though it may have excited the admiration of Symeon the friar, its realism would not impose upon modern discernment.

Sir S. Meyrick informs us that the great hall of Borthwick Castle, in Scotland, dating from Henry III., 1216-1272, has (1836) on its vaulted ceiling the remains of painting such as occur in old illuminations; and there can yet be traced the representation of a castle with its battlements, towers, and pinnacles, and the legend 'Ye Temple of Honor.'

Unless the wainscoting of this period was as good as that of later times in the matter of joinery, it is probable that the introduction of tapestry was conducive to greater comfort, and also, perhaps, to economy. We have seen from the Close Roll extracts how this, that, and the other castle required money to be spent on its repainting. Now tapestries were portable, and, packed with other coverings into oak chests, could be taken from castle to castle as required. Tapestry from the commencement of the twelfth century was, according to M. Eugène Muntz's *La Tapisserie*, well known in Western Europe. Other authorities date its general use a century later. In the first half of the fourteenth century it was being made at Arras, the town which gives its name to the manufacture. In 1447 the Duke of Exeter bequeaths to his son, Sir Henry Holland, all the stuff of his wardrobe and his arras, so that it probably was generally used in England in the early part of the fifteenth century. Some old castles in France have still the hooks on their walls from which the arras was hung, and at Winchester Cathedral they are yet to be seen. There it was used to decorate the nave upon high days and holidays.

We have now—in default of existing specimens of the actual furniture placed in rooms—acquired at least certain definite information as to their general decoration. We may conclude that in the houses of the rich, from the thirteenth century onwards, there need have been no deficiency of colour from wall-paintings, coloured windows, and later from tapestry hangings.[1] In another

[1] See Appendix I.

work I have had occasion to express a regret that the royal palaces are not such universal museums of furniture as a collector might wish. This, of course, is due to changes of fashion and the habit of relegating to the lumber-room everything that showed signs of wear. Other reasons might be adduced to account in part for the disappearance of the older types, so that royal residences such as those of Windsor and Buckingham Palace are now mainly filled with French furniture of the eighteenth century. It would appear, from a list of the so-called 'Jocular Tenures' in Mr. W. J. Loftie's *Coronation Book of Edward VII.*, quoted from Sandford's *Coronation of James II.*, that the Lord Great Chamberlain claimed to carry the king's shirt and clothes to the king on the morning of his coronation, and with the help of the Chamberlain of the Household to dress his Majesty. For this service he claimed the bed, bedding, and furniture of the king's chamber, with forty yards of crimson velvet and other perquisites. The Court of Claims disallowed the furniture and other things claimed, but conceded the velvet and compromised for the rest for £200. I am indebted to Mr. Albert Hartshorne, F.S.A., for the information that a Chippendale cabinet belonging to a member of his family is said to have come from the bedchamber of George II. on his death in 1760, into the possession of a Lord of the Bedchamber, William Ferdinand Carey, eighth Baron Hunsdon. It found its way to St. Osyth's Priory, Essex, whence it was sold about 1844. At the same date the Rev. J. Marsden, for long vicar of Spalding, bought a table which also came from the king's bedchamber, having been, it is said, claimed by the Lord of the Bedchamber as his right. In such ways may much of the more ancient furniture from the royal palaces have been scattered.

As the existing specimens of English Gothic furniture are mostly of ecclesiastical type, it will only be necessary to refer to a few of them in a work which

is chiefly devoted to secular examples of furniture. Types of Gothic chests will be described in greater detail to show the advance made by the joiner when he bethought himself of light panelling.

Chairs did not come into common use until the sixteenth century, and the early ones existing are purely ecclesiastical. Comparatively plain is that well-known relic the coronation chair in Westminster Abbey. Made about the year 1300, it has suffered, like the celebrated chairs of St. Peter and of Dagobert, from later additions. The lions supporting it are of more recent manufacture. The back rises in a high-pitched gable or pediment of triangular shape. The sides are panelled with arches beneath which are two quatrefoils.

In Shaw's *Specimens* is to be found a more magnificent example from Evesham, fourteenth or early fifteenth century, with an elaborate single-arched back enriched with many trefoils. On the top of the arched back is a broad outer border of vine and grape carving, which is continued down the concave-edged sides forming the arms of the chair. Shaw illustrates another chair of about 1460 showing the marked architectural characteristics of the Perpendicular style. The top of the back is horizontal, and the back is panelled with three arches filled with thick tracery, chiefly three large quatrefoils to each arch. Spandrels between the arches are filled with oak-leaf carving. The front of the seat is a row of four arches. Above these, and just under the top of the seat, is a row of quatrefoils. The arms or tops of the sides come forward from the back in a concave curve enriched as on the Evesham chair, oak, however, taking the place of vine leaves. This oak-leaf carving runs down almost to the floor, but from the seat to the ground it is diversified by being fronted with a slender octagonal pillar.

Outwardly the sides are divided up with pointed arches. At the level of the seat these are crossed by the transom or horizontal bar of Perpendicular

architecture. The spandrel above these arches formed by the rest of the side is filled with figure-carving in relief, and the back is finished with pedestals supporting on one side two lions upright facing each other and holding up a crown, on the other a grotesque beast like an elephant with a castle on its back. The chair was apparently one of a set of stalls made for a church, and does not seem to be still in the Hall of St. Mary, at Coventry, as in the year 1836. Reproductions of Shaw's prints of these chairs may be seen in Mr. Litchfield's *History of Furniture*, p. 32.

If proof is required of the absolute connection for more than three centuries, 1180-1560, between architecture and the styles of furniture, it can be gathered from the elaborate representations of two thrones of the fifteenth century copied by Willemin in his *Monumens Français inédits* from a psalter in the National Library at Paris. These have flying buttresses and crocketed pinnacles in abundance, and, most remarkable, the backs represent not merely pointed arches, but windows also. In the case of one of them, two pointed arches with crockets on the outside mouldings stick up without support above the back rail. We must, however, remember that these are manuscript versions of grandiose imaginations. Simpler and more domestic bedroom chairs are shown in other manuscripts. These, of the fourteenth century, are foreign, but an English example would, perhaps, have been similar in general lines. A miniature in 'Othea,' a poem by Christina di Pisan, represents a boxed-in seat, of which the sides continued upwards form the arms of the chair, and a perfectly upright, very tall back, with four narrow upright panels.[1]

At Bere Regis Church, Dorset, is a pair of chancel chairs of the Perpendicular period,[2] one of which, as less altered than the other, is given in Plate I. There

[1] Reproduced in Mr. F. Litchfield's *Illustrated History of Furniture.*

[2] Probably two of a set of stalls. In Browne's Hospital, Stamford, is a curious so-called 'cope' chair.

is linen-fold panelling in the back. The later chair of the Abbot of Glastonbury, now in the bishop's palace at Wells, should be familiar to most readers, as it has been reproduced in countless numbers for chancel and library purposes. It is a seat on two pairs of cross-legs with a round bar between them. The back is short and square, and the arms are pieces of wood, somewhat ogee-shaped; their outside edges concave above and convex where they approach the front of the seat and cross-legs. The date is about 1510, but the legs and seat are restored. The right arm inside has the name 'Johannes Arthurus,' the back 'Monachus Glastonie'; the left arm inside 'Salvet eũ Deus, Amen.' On the left arm outside is inscribed 'Da Pacem Dne'; on the right arm outside 'Sit Laus Deo.' The characters are Gothic, and the ornament of the back panel chiefly geometrical.

Of Gothic tables, for want of examples, it is difficult to speak. Shaw represents one from a manuscript, No. 264 in the Bodleian at Oxford. This is a light and extremely elegant little piece of furniture of the type of those fragile nests of tables, made to fit inside each other, of the mahogany period. The slab is on two thin uprights, the square space between which is filled with the most graceful architectural tracery. The main ornament is circular, and contains pairs of pointed arches with their heads converging at the centre. The uprights are attached at the bottom to cross pieces which form the bearing on the floor. It is reasonable to suppose that the majority of tables were upon the board and trestle[1] principle until the 'joined' tables, of which we have plenty of seventeenth century examples, came into vogue. Quite small trestle tables are represented in miniatures, such as one of Anne of Brittany at St. Petersburg. Here the table is a flat slab on two

[1] In St. Mary's Church, Cleobury Mortimer, is a heavy slab upon two pairs of Gothic-moulded legs slanting like trestles.

X-shaped supports, but a nice little table with solid standards, and an ogival arch between as a bearer for the top slab, is shown in that same miniature (from the poem by Christina di Pisan) which I have before quoted. This is a foreign one which English specimens may have resembled. Mr. J. H. Pollen (*Furniture and Woodwork at the South Kensington Museum*) gives an exceptional instance from a manuscript of the early fifteenth century with a single broad foot shaped like the base of a chalice.[1]

No beds earlier than those of the Tudor period appear to have survived. In general shape they were probably similar to those we have of the early sixteenth century. There does, however, exist a cradle which is said to be that of Henry v. Two, in fact, lay claim to the distinction. One is in the possession of Mr. W. J. Braikenridge, Clevedon. It is an oblong box without a head-cover, swinging between two uprights each surmounted by an eagle. It came originally from Courtfield, near Monmouth, where Henry was put out to nurse. It appears from an illustration to have been recarved in the seventeenth century with the semi-circle or fan pattern. The other, which those who have seen it assert is not of the period, is a cradle upon rockers like those of later date. The writer of an article in *The Queen* newspaper upon Monmouth Castle and Troy House, at the former of which places it originally was, combats the assertion that rocker cradles were unknown in Henry v.'s time, and says that they appear in contemporary illustrations. This statement is partially borne out, or at least strengthened, by the fact that in a miniature representing the birth of a child from the *Histoire de la belle Hélaine*, in the National Library at Paris, there is a young child sleeping in a miniature four-post bed upon rockers. The date of this is the end of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth century.

[1] See Appendix, Note II.

For a complete discussion of the cupboards or 'armoires' (*armaria*, presumably from being meant to hold armour and weapons) of the Gothic period still existing, the reader is referred to Mr. F. Roe's *Ancient Coffers and Cupboards*. In England they are excessively rare. Probably the earliest were painted or covered with ornamental iron-work like that of the Brampton chest which is reproduced in this volume (Plate III.). Their fronts were flat, and contained perhaps two tiers of cupboard doors, in the manner of the German ones of the fifteenth century in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The typical English one is at York Minster, and is also of the fifteenth century (Plate II.). Its arrangement of partitions is irregular. On the left-hand side (of the spectator) there are two narrow cupboards one above the other, balanced on the right by a single narrow one stretching from top to bottom. The upper cupboard in the centre is a good deal shorter than the lower. Each of the centre ones has two folding doors. The other three have but one each. The ornament, as far as the woodwork goes, is confined to the top, which has low battlements ornamented with rosettes. The rest of the decoration is supplied by iron strap hinges of no great elaboration, and ring handles hanging from circular plates with scalloped edges.

Besides these armoires there also exist certain 'almeries,' either used for doles in churches like some of the later 'livery cupboards,' or as food cupboards for domestic use, in which case they would be the precursors of the 'butter cupboard,' of which Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane of Brympton, Somerset, possesses an example. Like that, these were pierced for the free ingress of air. Mr. Roe illustrates one belonging to Mr. Morgan Williams, St. Donat's Castle, Glamorganshire, which has six openings pierced with Gothic tracery. This tracery is of Perpendicular type. There

are two in Carlisle Cathedral, decoratively painted, iron-strap hinged, and also showing traces of a velvet covering.

English buffets or dressoirs, high, many-shelved pieces of furniture, of which French representations may be seen in Viollet-Le-Duc's *Dictionnaire du Mobilier*, do not remain to us; but a beautiful example of a less ambitious type, belonging to the early sixteenth century, should be mentioned. It is illustrated both by Mr. Roe and Mr. Litchfield. The former calls it a 'credence'—a term applied either to a receptacle of communion-plate in churches, now become merely a table, or else to a combination table and cupboard used for domestic purposes. In the latter case the object, Mr. Roe says on page 5 of his book, would be a cupboard set upon legs, with a shelf underneath, and the top would be used by the steward to carve the meat, which, for safety's sake, he would be expected previously to taste. As the height of the example referred to, belonging to Mr. E. Barry of Ockwells Manor, near Bray, Berkshire, is nearly four feet, it would have been an exceedingly inconvenient thing for carving, even if its top had been large enough for the purpose—about four feet by two. I think, therefore, we may dismiss the name 'credence' and call it, with Mr. Litchfield, a 'buffet.' It consists of an enclosed upper part with a front of three heavily moulded panels. The light cornice is decidedly classical in style. The stiles between the panels are decorated with leaf-work, and there is a bold twisted moulding running round three sides below the panels. The lower part is an open stand upon four legs, with a shelf not far from the floor. The back legs are plain rectangular, the front pilaster-shaped of the Tudor type with imbrications. Between these legs, and under the twist moulding, are two very flat ogival arch shapes separated by a pendant. The front of the shelf (about on a line with the

bases of the pilasters) has a skirting piece cut into curved shapes, the centre of which recalls the ogival forms above. A noticeable feature is the little cross cut just above this central point. It is supposed by some that the presence of such a cross upon furniture denotes a pre-Reformation origin. However convenient it might be to adopt this view, it is to be feared that the notion must be relegated to the category of the unauthenticated. This cross is to be found exactly the same on a stool belonging to Mr. Seymour Lucas, R.A., who was the original discoverer of Mr. Barry's buffet.

In the same collection is a cupboard of similar date carved with two very protuberant heads, and an example of the rebus which was popular in those days. The founder of a building, or the owner of a piece of furniture, was fond of making a play on his name, expressing it by means of objects. In this case the centre panel has the initials A. W., and a barrel or tun supposed to be fastened on a wall, and the name, Mr. Roe concludes (p. 103), is 'Walton.' A well-known stone example in which the tun figures is on the inner walls of the front quadrangle of Lincoln College, Oxford, with the addition of a beacon on it. The name represented is that of Beckington, a great benefactor of the college. The most profuse instance is perhaps in Bishop Langton's chantry at Winchester. He died in 1501. The vine is carved in wood springing from a tun, indicative of his see, Winton, and on the groining is his own rebus, a long tun carved in stone. A hen on a tun stands for his prior, Hunton. The tun is a chief decorative motive of the groining, being repeated perhaps sixteen times. Such ornamental use of so prosaic an object reminds us of the festoons of knuckle-bones serving an admirable decorative purpose upon some Florentine stone chimneypieces of the Renaissance.

CHAPTER II

EARLY OAK CHESTS

NO piece of oak furniture which has descended to us from our forefathers is so universally owned and used as the chest or coffer. In almost every sale of farm or cottage furniture in the less sophisticated country districts one or more of these are to be found. They vary from elaborately carved specimens, such as that of 'Esther Hobsonne' in the Victoria and Albert Museum, to examples with plain stiles and panels, and perhaps a mere incised semi-circle pattern, or less than that, upon the upper rail. But, carved or not, they are as useful as they were in the first years that they were made. So it happens that in most instances a collection of old oak furniture is begun with the nucleus of an oak chest, because the housewife—whatever her opinion may be of its artistic merits—can find for it some definite employment. If, in addition, it awakes a pleasant memory of the manner in which it was acquired, if it was routed out half-ruined from some garret in an old manor-house, or from a stable where it had served the common purpose of a corn-bin — all this adds, by the mysterious workings of the association of ideas, to the pleasure of acquisition.

Simple as is the shape of the chest, there is much in the proportion and working out of details in a good example that is worthy of attention. The attractiveness of the genuine colour of old oak, so different from

the dead blackish stain which is the imitator's convention, the relative merits of smooth or panelled lids, the beading of stiles, the great question of reticence of decoration—whether it is better that the stiles and rails be plain, and the panels carved, or the reverse; whether both framework and panelling may be floridly adorned; the advantages or disadvantages of inlay upon oak,—all these matters may be considered as well in the case of an oak-chest as in a cabinet; and while the latter is a comparative rarity, within a short radius from the centre of a small country town perhaps fifty chests of the seventeenth century, if not of earlier date, can be discovered.

The earliest chests we have remaining were made for ecclesiastical purposes, and are still to be found in the parish churches for which they were originally constructed. They are comparatively few in number, and examples like them are of course practically impossible to be obtained by the collector. The Gothic periods to which they belong are undoubtedly those of the finest productions in oak carving, and it is necessary, even in so brief a notice as this, to give examples of their different types. I cannot do better than refer those who wish to learn almost all there is to be known about these ancient monuments of English furniture to the beautifully illustrated and altogether excellent work of Mr. Fred Roe upon *Ancient Coffers and Cupboards*. There the reader will find an account of almost every important example.

The early chests and coffers may be divided into four main classes:—1. Those which depend for strength and ornament largely upon ironwork. 2. Those which combine ironwork with decoration by painting. 3. Those which have fronts composed of one or more horizontal and two upright slabs of wood, and are carved with ecclesiastical architecture—such as windows and their tracery, and occasionally buttresses.

4. More secular chests, with subjects of knights tilting at each other, and other details.

To the first class very few remaining examples belong. I give an illustration of perhaps one of the very earliest relics of this kind (Plate III.). It is in Brampton Church, Northants, not far from Pitsford and Brampton Station, and, as will be seen, is by no means in perfect condition. It is, however, well cared for, as is not always the case with important relics of this description. If it were not for its ironwork it would be an almost entirely plain box. The only ornament on the woodwork is a two-inch deep band of about six lines of horizontal reeding or beading along the top rail. Traces of colour the writer was unable to find, but they might be discoverable in a strong light. The lid and sides are venerably wrinkled, scarred, and furrowed with old open worm 'quarries.' So rough is the wood from age and wear that it might almost appear in places to have been scarcely denuded of its bark. It is worth while to record these signs of age, as on at least one *soi-disant* fourteenth century chest they are conspicuously absent. The length of the Brampton chest is about 6 feet 5 inches, its width perhaps 19 inches, and depth about 17½ inches, so that it is considerably longer in proportion to its other dimensions than a seventeenth century chest. The front, of one plank, is about 1⅛ inches thick at the top in the thickest place. The top is also of one plank, but has split and been mended. The sides are of from ⅝ to ¾ of an inch thick. Viollet le Duc attributes to this chest the date of 1190. It has massive iron handles at the ends, and it is noticeable that the branches of the ironwork are apparently fastened together by what looks like a flat collar welded tight round the stems. This produces an appreciable enhancement of relief in the design. What remains of the hinges is stamped roughly and irregularly with a four-petalled flower. The edges have a Vandyke pattern.

The ironwork of the front is more ornamental than protective, and is nailed on with flat round-headed nails half an inch in diameter.

In the Victoria and Albert Museum is a chest, No. 733, which is said to be French, probably because it was part of the Peyre collection of French carving. Its ironwork is, however, so similar in style to that of the Brampton chest that there is every likelihood of its being English. The stems of the ironwork have the same ribbed section, the chief difference between the two chests in respect of their mountings being that the 'collar,' which projects in the Brampton chest, in the museum specimen is no higher than the stem and branches which it joins. Those junctions are incised or stamped with diamonds. The lid of the latter chest is a new one.

Our second division comprises those chests which combine ironwork with decoration by painting, which, as we have seen, some conjecture to have been the only two forms of decoration used prior to 1250. A fine example of this style is to be found at Newport Church, Essex, and has been excellently reproduced in colour by Mr. Roe in his *Ancient Coffers and Cupboards*. The ironwork in this case makes no pretence of decoration beyond what nail-heads set at regular intervals may supply. The decoration of the front consists of shields set side by side along the upper rail, and circles similarly placed on the lower. Between the two rows is an exceptional feature, described by Mr. Roe as 'a band of open tracery cast in lead or pewter.' The inside of the lid has five crossed arches painted with figures, the central one containing Christ on the cross. The colours are chiefly red and green. This chest is of the thirteenth century. To the fourteenth century belongs another painted one, also reproduced in colour by Mr. Roe, which was formerly in the Court of Chancery, Durham. The ironwork in this

makes a nearer approach to decoration. There are two horizontal corner clamps at each end of the front, with double-tailed ends. Arranged vertically on the front at equal distances are six flat bars, each ending at the top in the double tail. The lid is again the most ornamental part, being decorated with four heraldic shields, and a St. George attacking the dragon, in brilliant colours, chiefly red, yellow, and blue, upon a green ground.

To the third class belong most of the ancient Gothic chests which are to be found in our parish churches, and their points of divergence from the regular panelled chest of the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries shall be described at greater length. The front is composed of massive slabs of wood. In the centre, which is sometimes one large piece forming the main part of the front, the grain runs horizontally. The length is increased at both ends by two other slabs in which the grain runs vertically, and their lower ends project beyond the bottom of the middle piece to form the legs or feet. The earlier the chest, the more massive are these upright side-pieces. The ends of the chest are not always formed, as might be expected, by flat slabs. The slabs are there, but are strengthened on the outside by cross-bars of massive construction forming sometimes four, sometimes six 'pigeon-holes' or divisions in the end according to the number of crossing pieces.[1] The lids are flat and unpanelled. Iron hinges are not used until the fourteenth century. Instead of this there is an arrangement which is thus concisely described in Parker's *Glossary of Architecture*: 'Across each end of the lid, on the underside of it, a strong piece of wood is fixed, which appears on the outside' (of the chest end) 'when the chest is closed.

[1] In Pershore Abbey a late fourteenth century chest has front and sides of 'pigeon-hole' work. Two light arches on each stile recall the Dersingham chest (p. 25). The only other decoration consists of mouldings, curiously incomplete, across the base. The top is a late make-shift. There are iron strap-hinged doors in the front and traces of former painting.

The end of this piece and the upright piece at the back angle of the chest are halved together, and an iron pin is put through them so as to form a hinge; . . . there is often a small pear-shaped piece of iron nailed over the end of the pin to keep it in its place.' Most typical in every way is the thirteenth century chest at Stoke d'Abernon Church, Surrey (Plate IV.). It has very broad uprights at each end of the front, which on their inner edges, where they begin to serve as feet, are moulded somewhat into the semblance of a little short pillar. The ends are divided by two cross-bars into four divisions. The lid is hinged as above described, and the carved ornament beyond the 'pillars' on the leg edges is confined to three incised circles, one on each of the slabs of the front. These ornaments are of a decidedly geometrical shape, and such as might be made with a V-shaped gouge. They resemble Norwegian chip carving more than anything else, and certainly suggest a Scandinavian influence. This chest is figured both by Shaw in his *Specimens of Ancient Furniture*, and by Parker in his *Glossary of Architecture*. The top is formed of one solid slab of wood perfectly plain, and the front of three slabs only. The ends are protected by two bars of wood at right angles to each other, and about 2 inches wide by 1½ inches thick. Backing them is the board which closes in the end, and which one would naturally expect to be as massive as possible. The ends are, however, by no means as thick as the front, or lid, or back, being only ¾ of an inch at the top, and present an instance of somewhat illogical construction. The varying thicknesses of the slabs seem to suggest the result of splitting oak instead of sawing it, if, on that scale, it were possible. The centre slab is 1 inch thick at most towards the top, and 1¼ inches at the bottom. The thickness of the front upright pieces tapers from 2 inches on the outside at the end of the front to 1¼ inches where the uprights touch the centre slab. The

back is of three slabs like the front. Plain old iron hinges, more than half rusted away, have been put on at a later date, but the true hinging is by means of the wooden flange, as described above, which at one end has become detached from the lid, and now remains on the top of the cross-bars when the lid is lifted. This enables us to see that the flange was pegged on to the lid by four wooden pegs about $\frac{3}{8}$ths of an inch in thickness, and set at equal intervals apart. When the lid is closed the flange on it overlaps the end boards of the chest and shuts down on to the top of the uprights of front and back, and on to the perpendicular cross-bars of the end. A slot or mortise is cut in the inside half of the centre of the flange, and this corresponds to a tenon on the perpendicular cross-bar. The front end of the flange has a tenon which fits into a mortise on the front upright slab. The mortising, or rather halving, arrangement for the play of the 'hinge' necessitates of course that both the lid flange and the back upright should be rounded, the segmental top of the upright fitting into the segment of a circle cut halfway through the flange. What is described by Parker as a pear-shaped piece of iron nailed on to protect the pin hinge appears to me very like an ordinary piece of hasping which has been applied to the purpose rather than an original forging for the place, but the effects of time render it difficult to be certain as to this. The colour of the chest is the natural tone of the wood rendered grey with age, and there do not seem to be any traces of painting upon it as upon others of the Gothic period. The central 'wheel' of ornament is $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter approximately, the other two being slightly smaller. The total length of the front is rather over four feet, the back being rather less. Split slabs of oak do not lend themselves to perfect rectangular construction, and the front uprights, where they are grooved and tongued to the centre slab, being de-

cidedly thinner than on their outside edges, there is an appearance of hollowsidedness, noticeable when one looks down from above upon the top rail. Only when thus observed can the method of joining the horizontal to the upright slabs be noticed. The centre front plank is flush with the side pieces on the outside. Inside, the side uprights overlap the centre. At the back, however, inside and out, the side uprights project beyond and embrace the 'tongue' of the centre slab, which is shot into their greater thickness. Dovetailing, conspicuous on the front, is a later development of joinery, not found till the fifteenth century. The cypress chest, illustrated in Plate XXXIII., shows it very well.

In another chest of the thirteenth century, which Shaw figures, the influence of Gothic architecture is most apparent. It is one from Climping Church, Sussex, and is exactly similar to the last in main construction. But a decorative step in advance is made by the shallow arcading of ten pointed arches which stretch across the centre slab. Deeper and much more elaborate arches are to be found on a chest at Haconby, Lincoln, also reproduced by Shaw. The centre slab here might easily be enlarged into a highly ornate screen for a church. Henceforward, until the end of the Gothic period, we can see the same forms in the church and the house, on the chair or the thurible. The same pinnacles and crockets, the same window traceries may be discerned upon stone and wood and the precious metals. From the cathedral to the miniature box or ivory triptych there is scarcely any change except in scale. A noticeable feature of the Haconby chest, which is of the fourteenth century, is the winged dragons on the uprights. Very similar carvings are to be found on a beautifully elaborate chest at Brancepeth, Durham, and also on one at St. Mary Magdalen's Church, Oxford.

Illustrated here is a very interesting specimen from Dersingham Church, near King's Lynn, Norfolk. This

also is of the fourteenth century, and is highly elaborate in its decoration. It is noticeable that the arcading, which is the chief feature of most of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Early English or Decorated period chests, usually either stretches right across the front or else across the central slab, the side pieces containing the winged beasts or whatever diversifies the design. In this case there is no arcading, but a three-lighted window with small arches on each side, on either upright slab at the two ends of the chest. The central slab is divided into four partitions with a sunk field and a raised border, which decidedly suggest the general arrangement of the panelled chests of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The later these chests are in date, the less massive are the upright 'stiles,' if so we may call them. It is to be noticed that the stiles of this specimen are not nearly so broad in proportion as the Stoke d'Abernon uprights, nor as those of the chest at Haconby. The upper and lower rails bear about the same proportion to the four sunk fields of the centre of the chest front as the rails of a later panelled chest. This front is constructed of three parallel horizontal planks forming the centre part, and two upright ones for the ends. Its lid, only half of which is remaining, is not so thick as those of some chests of the same period. In the tracery of the windows at each end there is a decided 'flamboyant' feeling, such as perhaps might be expected in Norfolk, which had such close dealings with the Continent. General considerations of shape and this tracery would seem to suggest that this chest was made late in the fourteenth century. The reduction of the arcades to mere windows at the end, the imitation of panelling, and the bird and rose pattern of the upper and lower rails, render it a nearer approach in general scheme of decoration to the domestic chest of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than any other of the period. It is difficult, indeed

perhaps impossible, to find any close link existing which shows the evolution—some might prefer to say the decadence—of the later secular chests from their more ecclesiastical forerunners. It is obvious that Gothic arcading could not easily be accommodated to a chest with stiles and panels. Consequently with a radical change of construction there must follow a certain change of ornament, and if it were possible to date this Dersingham chest in the fifteenth century, I should be inclined to regard it as the first indication of the coming alteration. The window tracery resembles that of a window at King's Sutton Church, Northants, date 1380 *circa*, but the shapes of some of the letters render it not impossible that they were carved in the fifteenth century. In a manuscript (*Summa Bartholomæi Pisani Ord. Prædic. de Casibus Conscientiæ*) of about 1472, very similar letters occur. Matters such as this, however, require very careful verification, and the general shape of the chest, with the disposition of its ornament, is the most suggestive of a fifteenth century date.[1] The lettering is a great feature. Not only are there the names of the evangelists with their curious symbols on the front, but the lid is or was quite elaborately inscribed. We have noticed that only half remains, but very fortunately there is a record preserved of the other half. This is to be found in Cotman's *Architectural Remains*. Round the border run the words '*Jesus Nazarenus Crucifixsus Rex Judeorum.*' Within the centre of the lid are the isolated letters S A R R A arranged in a 'quincunx.' The border inscription begins on the front edge and runs round to the back, where for some odd purpose of mystification, perhaps, it has to be read backwards. Even as late as 1838, when Cotman's book was published, the etching shows that the chest had been sawn into two pieces. Whoever stole or destroyed the lost portion is deserving of reprobation. The present

[1] See note in List of Plates.

rector of the parish has most wisely had this interesting relic roped in to protect it from further vandalistic attacks. There is some hope that before long a restoration from Cotman's plate of the lost portion may be skilfully effected. Never was there a more suitable occasion for legitimate restoration, based on reliable evidence, as opposed to the all too common 'conjectural emendation.'

In France there are to be found chests of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, which show the continuity of style between early and later chests. There may be found in M. de Champeaux's work on French furniture, *Le Meuble*, two or three illustrations of the sixteenth century chest panelled, and no longer of heavy and rudely joined slabs. The continuous arcading is, of course, not to be found upon these, but each panel is filled up with intricate tracery of a flamboyant character. In some cases coats of arms are the central ornament of the tracery, in others figures of ecclesiastics, both styles being found on the same chest. In one case the big uprights at each end are actually carved with the guilloche or double-entwined cable ornament with which, when we deal with the end of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, we shall become exceedingly familiar. Whether upon the French chest in question it can be regarded as part of the original design could only be definitely settled by inspection of the original, the ownership of which is not stated by M. de Champeaux. Next in date to these are in all probability those objects of furniture in which heads, sometimes portrait profiles, are found under arches or enclosed in circular borders, a style which lasted certainly from the reign of Henry VII. to that of Elizabeth, as the famous Sudbury's Hutch in Louth Church, Lincolnshire, the panelling from the old house at Waltham Abbey (Plate XIV.), now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, a somewhat problematical chest (Plate XXV.) in the same place, and other examples indicate.

To return to the Gothic chest, the architectural buttress, which in the Perpendicular period reached such striking developments, is found upon some few chests still remaining. The best example is, perhaps, that of Huttoft Church, Lincolnshire, which is figured in Parker's *Glossary of Architecture*. It has six buttresses of two stories each on the front, applied, as is the tracery of the arches between, to the planks of the chest. Though fairly elaborate with leafage and crockets, it has no particular fineness or beauty of line and curve. Originally it stood upon short feet, the outsides of which were columnar in shape, but they have disappeared. A worse fate has befallen the other buttressed chest which Parker figures. It was once at Guestling Church, Sussex, and was of the fifteenth century flamboyant or Flanders type. Mr. Fred Roe (*Ancient Coffers and Cupboards*, p. 75) informs us that only a single panel of it remained more than thirty-seven years ago. Engravings of it are to be found in various books besides Parker's. There is at Faversham Church, Kent, a very fine chest with a double arcading of nine arches with buttresses between. This, Mr. Roe says, is 'the earliest example of a buttressed coffer existing in England,' whilst one of 'absolutely identical design' is in Rainham Church, Kent. The Huttoft chest is later in date than these and has panels, and the doubtful peculiarity of its tracery being applied instead of being cut out of the solid.

Hitherto all the chests mentioned, with one exception, have been purely ecclesiastical in design, but there remains a small class of chests in which secular motives and figure-carving take the place of the arcades and tracery of church architecture. On these, as on some chests of the third class, are to be found remains of painting which must originally have made them as gorgeous as those of Italy. York Minster is the home of one of these scarce relics, of which the main

panel of the front chiefly represents St. George slaying the dragon. The carving is very bold and free and in high relief (Plate VI.). It may be compared with a panel in the Victoria and Albert Museum, also reproduced (Plate VII.), which is undoubtedly by the same carver and displays the same subject with slight differences. From the evidence of the shape of St. George's bassinet, Mr. Fred Roe assigns this panel, which was doubtless part of a once-existing chest, to the reign of Richard II. He discusses very fully the likelihood of these chests and the other remaining ones of the same kind at Harty Church, Isle of Sheppey, Southwold Church, Suffolk, and another in the Victoria and Albert Museum said to be French, being really English work. As they form such a small class we need not longer delay over them here, except to state that the crow's step gable of the architecture of the fortified town in the Museum panel is one of the features which render the English nationality doubtful. So spirited is the carving, so great an advance is it upon the strictly architectural chests which we have been considering, that there is every temptation to claim it for our own.

CHAPTER III

THE RENAISSANCE HOUSE AND THE PATTERN OF OLD OAK FURNITURE

IN the Elizabethan period there is no longer so great a rarity of existing objects of furniture and woodwork. It is true that we are still, and shall always be, hampered, as must generally be the case in considerations of the applied arts, by an inability to name the designer and maker of this or that particular example. The historian of French furniture is more fortunate in that respect in at least one period, and that, perhaps, the most interesting of all. The enactment by which the *maître ébéniste*, after 1751, was required to stamp his name upon his work has been of the greatest use. We cannot but regret that the practice has not been general in all countries and at all periods. Whilst adding greatly to the interest of the study of furniture, it would still leave a multitude of points upon which the ingenuity of connoisseurs might exercise itself. There would be no danger of the task becoming too easy. We are grateful for an authentic date; we like to see the name, even the initials, of the owner. The fancy may amuse itself as to the history and fortunes of that Esther Hobsonne who so uncompromisingly claims possession of her chest in the Victoria and Albert Museum. How much more useful would it have been for the study of the evolution of furniture if we could have found even a few pieces in each class marked with the same maker's name? In

the eighteenth century we have the assistance of the books of design. We can identify the style of Chippendale, Heppelwhite, and Sheraton, and the rest to a great extent from their published drawings. In the periods preceding theirs we have nothing to help us. The curse of anonymity is, however, one to be put up with; and, after all, there are compensations. A fine piece of furniture stands on its own merits. The finest possible drawing or picture loses in pecuniary value, and too often, therefore, in estimation, for want of an authentic signature.

There is, indeed, the less ground for complaining of the anonymity of the furniture-makers of the oak period when we remember that the magnificent houses which contained their handiwork were the masterpieces of unnamed architects, or rather of no architect at all. The word 'architect' was hardly used at the time that the great Renaissance houses were built. A 'surveyor' was the most responsible person after the owner. He furnished a plan, but it was of a very different kind from those which are made to-day. If we imagine such a sketch as an architect might make upon a sheet of notepaper, by way of giving the first elementary form to the misty floating ideas in the head of a client who thinks of building, we shall have some notion of the surveyor's plans. Compared with the professional elaborations of the present time they would appear slight indeed. The surveyor gave no detailed schemes to the masons, no finished scale-drawings to the carpenter, no designs to the carver. The best documentary evidence as to the system of house designing and building in this period is the book of drawings by John Thorpe preserved in the Soane Museum, and in that, though there are many general plans of houses, the details for the joiner and the carpenter are remarkably few. Authorities on architecture have not yet been able to settle how many of the drawings in John

Thorpe's book are original designs for houses made by him, and how many are plans of existing houses built by other men, and only measured up by Thorpe after their completion. This lack of information may help to console us for our inability to name more than a single English furniture designer or carver of the period to whose work we can actually point. The name of one is preserved at St. Thomas's Church, Salisbury. Inside the porch, on the left hand wall, is a wood carving in relief, perhaps for a chimney-piece. The subjects appear to be the sacrifice of Isaac and Jacob's dream. There are cherubs and satyrs below. The top and side mouldings are an ovolo, decorated with a scroll pattern which includes a Tudor rose. An inscription in paint records the following:—

'Here under lyeth the Body of Humphrey Peckham
who died the 2nd day of February Anno 1671
aged 83 yrs His own Worke.'

The carving is bold but not very refined, such, in fact, as might be inspired by the Flemish work which, as we shall presently see, came to England in great quantities at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century. Yet it is good and elaborate enough for Peckham to take a legitimate pride in it, and an interesting record of one of the few named craftsmen who lived in the days of Elizabeth, and left actual proofs of their carving behind them. A careful study of the Hampton Court Palace accounts, and the work which they record, might enable us to assign their due share to many carvers of English birth whose names are preserved. Though we can specify no master mind such as later was found in an Inigo Jones or a Christopher Wren, we are very far from discovering that every man in those days was a law to himself. There is an extraordinary interchange of motives to be found amongst

the productions of the stone-masons, the wood-workers, the furniture-makers, and the workers in metal and textile fabrics. To take a few concrete instances, though it is an exploded idea that houses with H and E shaped plans were built mainly in compliment to Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, yet there is not much doubt that the fancy played round the idea after the house was built. It is true that the H shape is simply caused by the extensions of wings at the back and front of a house, and the E shape by wings and a central porch; but John Thorpe in his book gives a rhyme which goes far to prove that such conceits of letter-shapes were very much in the minds of men of the Tudor and Elizabethan periods:—

> 'These 2 letters I and T
> Joyned together as you see
> Is ment for a dwelling house for mee.'

'Bess of Hardwick' placed her initials, not as the plan of her house, but to grace the parapet and be in all men's sight at Hardwick Hall. The wood-carvers follow the masons and place the initials of the owner upon chests, of which Prior Silksted's[1] is a splendid early instance, and sometimes the whole name, as on that of Esther Hobsonne,[2] in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The tendency to letter-shape in design is found again on a smaller scale in the jeweller's art. Monogram pendants beautifully enamelled were fashionable at the period of Henry VIII. Anne Boleyn wears her initial on a jewel in one of her portraits; and on a unique medallion of Isabella of Castile, sixty years earlier in date, I have seen a head-band the ornament of which consists entirely of Gothic lettering. The silversmith is not above taking a hint from the mason for the steeples of his 'steeple cups,' which were very fashionable from about 1610 to 1630. On them and other cups of the end of the sixteenth century, as, of

[1] Plate XXIII. [2] Plate XXIX.

course, we might expect, we find the acanthus leaf, and the strap-work and masks of the cabinet and the panel with gadroons and flutes and reeds to match. Then if we turn to the embroiderers we can discover that they too have taken their inspiration for panels and borders, worked in all the brilliancy of gold and silver thread upon brocades and satins, from the same common stock. The use of an ornamental motive seems almost to have depended upon its capacity for universal application. If a Bess of Hardwick builds a palace she employs a style of ornament which some humbler Bess finds adaptable for her dower-chest or court-cupboard. If a jeweller requires a dignified shape for a tiny pendant, he finds it as often as not in the forms of architecture.

It is more important for our subject to know what are the usual decorative shapes to be found upon old oak furniture, than to lose ourselves in the effort to trace them to their original source. The Gothic inspiration which had placed series of pointed arches and window tracery upon our thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth century chests came at length to an end, and very tentatively in England the Renaissance style of classical ornament took its place. The first important work of Italian workmen in architecture was set in hand by Wolsey at Hampton Court in 1515. The influence of these men, and of the great artists, Torrigiano, who came to England in 1512, and has left the traces of his genius in Henry VII.'s Chapel, and Holbein, 1526[1]-1543, who as a decorative artist is to be reckoned an Italian, will account for all the most florid and graceful carving and inlay of scroll-work, with elegant leafage and figures, such as may be seen, for instance, upon the panelling of the room from Exeter in the Victoria and Albert Museum.[2] All that is suave and flowing may be set down to Italian teaching. English workmen must have learnt much from the

[1] Date of his coming to England. [2] Plate xv.

foreigners, of whom they were so jealous, and have turned their lesson to account when Henry VIII.'s quarrel with the Pope, the subsequent change of religion, and the impoverishment of England at Henry's death, helped to drive Italians away. That it was not easy to change from Gothic to classical ornament, the halting design of Gardiner's hybrid chantry in Winchester Cathedral gives a plain indication. If we look at an Italian cassone, such as that very ornate one, No. 3625, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, we find that the mouldings of its lid are worked with the acanthus leaf, such as it is found on the corbel-shaped brackets of English cabinets, bedsteads, and chimneypieces. On the edge of the lid is a form of the reed and flute, with the dart included, somewhat similar to that on a string-course of Kirby Hall, Northants, and more elaborate than one which runs over the windows of Apethorpe in the same county. The front of the chest has a bold scroll-and-leaf pattern, with masks at the ends, and will remind us of the panelling of the Exeter room in the same museum. The cushioned plinth of the chest has radiating voluted shapes, more beautiful than, but still resembling, the usual gadroons of the legs and frames of English long tables and the legs of beds. Its corners are treated with the acanthus exactly as that is found to vary the end of the cabinet drawers or the framing of a table. Finally, between the massive supporting lions which form the feet is a central ornament, composed of S-shaped curves on each side of a satyr mask. These same S-curves, with often a mask between them, form the top of the back in scores of English solid-backed oak chairs. There is in the museum a Venetian chair elaborately carved, and of the peculiar general shape which confined itself to Italy, fortunately for our comfort not commending itself to England. In this the S-curves are a prominent object. There is in the same

place another Venetian chair (No. 1538), with spiral-turned legs and stretchers and straight back, the type of which did, later on, for its simple utility, become very prevalent in England when Cromwell was Protector. This is upholstered on seat and back with Venetian brocade, the ornament of which is these same S-curves as they appear upon hundreds of panels of English oak.

The figures, male and female, on many English beds and chimneypieces, with terminal[1] shapes below, are also Italian in origin, but perhaps we derive some of them through Flemish and German channels. At any rate, in most of our English work they have a grotesque portliness which is scarcely classical.

It has to be admitted that many of the easily copied common patterns, which from their presence on simply carved furniture appearing to be typically English, we might fancy to be indigenous, come straight from Italy. Widest spread of all is perhaps the 'guilloche,' which may be described as a continuous strap ornament, forming a succession of circles. The series may be single, double, or even triple, but a very usual shape on English furniture is a single line of large circles, with smaller ones intervening. An illustration of it is included amongst our 'Specimens.'[2] This particular example from the front of a box in the writer's possession has three loops on each side of the small circle, filling up the space between the larger ones. A better example still is in the possession of Mr. J. E. Clifton, Swanage, Dorset, also on a box. Now this pattern, in which the loops might suggest a faggot shape, when taken by themselves, tied up by the small circles, is found on an Italian cross reproduced in Libonis' *Specimens of Crosses.* It is probably one of those votive crosses of some size to be found hung up in Venetian churches. The guilloche without the small intervening circle, and twisted so tight as to leave very

[1] 'Terminal'—a word which the writer begs leave to use to express the *tapering* form only of the classical 'term' or pedestal of a bust. [2] Plate x.

little open centre, is common in England and Italy, and is to be found in Byzantine ornament, whence it was borrowed at the Renaissance.[1] Such simple patterns furnish out the decorative scheme of much English provincial oak furniture, to the exclusion of others upon the Italian cassone mentioned before, which our workmen in the long run appear not to have approved. This abnegation of certain patterns may be attributed either to our want of sculpturesque carving skill, or to the reticence and soberness of English ideas, or finally to the hardness of our English oak. Italian and French *chefs-d'œuvre* are mostly in the more amenable walnut. Perhaps our workmen avoided such things as the boldly carved lions of the cassone because they preferred not to blunt their chisels in ambitious efforts which might have been unsuccessful.

The change of religion in 1536, and the impoverishment consequent upon Henry VIII.'s enormous expenditure, left, as we have seen, the Italians after a time little to do in England. The field was occupied by the Germans and Flemings, and with their aid the great Elizabethan houses, of which Charlecote, Warwickshire, 1556, is the earliest, were built. Burghley was built and ornamented by Germans in the years 1577 to 1587. Whereas the Italians had favoured our South Coasts, the Flemish influence had always been strong upon the East. There began a great importation from Flanders of ornamental cabinet fronts and other such things, to be made up in England, and these were the successors of the 'Flanders chests' of the Gothic period which are still to be found in some of our parish churches. These successors to the Italian coarsened the Renaissance inspiration. Their influence may be found in the male and female figures with strapwork on their fronts in lieu of clothes, the 'round and square' strapwork of table-borders, and the gadroon which appears on bed-posts

[1] The close-twisted guilloche is found in Assyrian art, *e.g.* on part of a glazed brick in the British Museum.

and the fronts of cabinet drawers. The use of much formal strapwork, either cut in the solid or applied to panels, is characteristic of the North European influence which followed that of the Italians. To the Flemings also we may attribute the increased heaviness of great diamond shapes superimposed upon square panels, and the numerous jutting or 'returning' angles and circles formed by applied mouldings set in all directions upon the panels of cabinets, so as sometimes almost to suggest a resemblance to the ground-plan of a fortress. They, too, are responsible perhaps for the excessive use of turned work, glued to stiles of panels on beds, cabinets, and chairs—generally in pillar or pilaster shapes; of round applied buttons, facetted shapes, and heavy ovals set in relief upon panels; of drop ornaments added below table frames, and the centre of arches in arched panels.

Whilst we are considering the paramount influence of the Renaissance, we must not ignore that other ruder influence which came from Scandinavia. This is observable in the northern parts of England, and especially in Yorkshire, where we shall find its traces upon that abnormal product of the old oak period, the Yorkshire chair with open back.

To define the exact limits of all these influences is perhaps an impossible task. Let us remember that classical architecture is the mainspring, whether we received it straight from Italy or through the muddier channels of Germany or Flanders. It seems pretty certain that as the seventeenth century progressed the severer feeling of the English nation threw off much that seemed too florid for its taste. In the more ordinary furniture which it is our chief object to study, the Jacobean and later carvers seem to have contented themselves with a few well-tried patterns which, stock or not, were easy of application to English oak, and might yet be slightly manipulated to suit the individual carver's fancy.

It is natural enough that there should have been the interchange of decorative motives to which I refer, if we remember that the masons who built the house, and the carpenters and joiners who made the interior woodwork and the furniture, were—unless foreigners, men expressly called in—very probably natives of the same village. Allowing for differences of technique, the simple pattern which sufficed for the lintel of a window, or for a string-course in stone, would do very well for the framing of a table. The moulding of a cornice is made by the mason for the outside walls in the same pattern as that used by the joiner for the highest adornment of his panelling. Some slight acquaintance, therefore, with the shapes of decoration employed on the exterior of the Renaissance house is likely to afford useful suggestions for the dating of furniture and the settling of questions of its genuineness. It will be necessary to refer more particularly to the decorative motives common on the various kinds of furniture; but briefly here I may mention certain well-known houses in which the most obvious furniture details can be plainly seen.

A very fine instance of the use of steeples in woodwork is to be found at Broughton Castle, Oxfordshire (early seventeenth century), over a corner door or 'interior porch' in the drawing-room. The arrangement is one for saving space, or rather, obviating the necessity of taking space from an adjoining room. The doorway is a flattish round arch with a pair of pillars on both sides. These support an elaborate cornice with scroll ornament upon it, and above appear the five huge steeples, which look well in need of so much support from below. The same shape in stone is found at Rushton and Kirby Halls, Northants, dating 1595 and 1572 respectively. Upon church screens in wood it is frequently to be found, as at Abbey Dore, Herefordshire.

'The Feathers' inn at Ludlow, originally a private house, has a front with overhanging stories, upon the timbering of which is carved the interlaced or connected circle pattern so common on beds and cabinets and chests. The equally common S-curve is there too, while in the gables appears the planted arch in pairs, exactly the same in general design as it appears on Elizabethan furniture, from the 'Great Bed of Ware' downwards. In what is now the coffee-room we find it on each side of a chimney-piece of oak, with the cypher of James I. above it.

Returning to stone houses, the semicircular or fan-shape, which I shall have occasion to describe as frequently occurring upon chairs with solid backs, is to be found in great size and perfection at Burford Priory, Oxfordshire. This Jacobean, or rather Carolean, house was chiefly built by the famous Speaker of the House of Commons, Lenthall, to whom the place was sold in 1634. The fan-shape appears over the bay above the porch. At Lower Walterstone, in Dorsetshire, an earlier house, built 1586, the fans occur over many of the windows. At Wroxton Abbey, Oxfordshire, built in 1618, there are four of these semicircles or fans over the porch. From 1586 to 1634, a period of nearly half a century, does this style of ornament appear to have been in demand, and within that period, if not later still, may we expect to find the chair with the top of its back so finished off. At the end of the seventeenth century the fan, or semicircle, changes into a shell upon chair tops, and a shell-shaped half dome, or cove, over porches and the tops of corner cupboards, or 'beaufaits,' as they were then called, with shelves for the display of plate and china. The shell is attributed to the Dutch influence of William III.'s reign. Whether this be so or not, it lasted long after him, and upon chairs in the early Chippendale style this often recurring shell is carved.

It is a question whether this fan or scallop-shell pattern is not one and the same thing (much used because it was easy to carve, and repaid the workman well by its strong effect of light and shade) with the frequently found scallop-shell over niches to hold sculpture, such as that of Sansovino in Italy.

The S-curve, whose uses in furniture a specimen plate[1] shows to be numerous, appears—with the C-curve of later popularity—on the cresting of the towers of Hardwick Hall, 1590, and to more beautiful effect upon the top of the entrance front of Burton Agnes, a lovely brick house, exceptional in that respect in Yorkshire, and containing a famous oak screen with figures and much elaborate panelling.

Turning to a shape much in demand for long borderings, we find on the lintels over the windows of Apethorpe, Northamptonshire, built in 1623, a pattern which may be described as of short upright flutings with rounded tops. The lower part of the concave flutes is filled by a convex shape of similar outline. Now this and similar patterns are extremely common upon the framework which supports the flat tops of tables of the period, those long, narrow, and heavy carving tables with turned legs which we shall have presently to consider.

The pattern is found in a very large size upon the celebrated monument to one of the Griffin family in Braybrook Church, Northamptonshire. A third place, again, is the magnificent ruin of Kirby Hall. On a string course of the west front of this beautiful place, 1572-1575, the pattern is used, but here there is a lance or dart shape added. This pattern has some similarity to the egg and spoon and dart bordering so common on chimney-pieces and over doors, but is too flat to be correctly described by that familiar name. On Northamptonshire houses the shape seems to have been popular, and I should expect to find it frequently upon

[1] VIII.

Northamptonshire tables. But the pattern is indeed widespread and long-lasting. It is to be found upon the Italian cassoni or chests, and it is part of the commonest stock-in-trade of the eighteenth-century style of Adam.

So much for the resemblances widely observable between the exterior styles of stonework and the interior styles of wood. The connection between the room and its furniture is in many cases more obvious still. It will be germane to our subject to mention some few of the well-known houses in which the motives on the panelling are practically identical with those on furniture. Haddon Hall is perhaps as familiar as any house in the country. We have to do with the Long Gallery, whose earliest possible date is between 1567-1584; and it must certainly have been built before 1611, when the Sir John Manners, who conceived its erection, died. The frieze, with its huge badges, overpowers the lower woodwork. Below it are coats of arms upon cartouche shapes.[1] Below these again come imbricated pilasters, between which is the familiar planted arch as it appears upon the outside of 'The Feathers' at Ludlow. The dado underneath these consists of large panels with mouldings dividing them into geometrical shapes. These latter panels, and the plain panels with the arch planted on them, are exactly what might be found on the lower and upper part of cabinets of the period.

At Bolsover Castle, in the 'Star Chamber,' date about 1620, the same kind of panelling may be seen as far as regards the planted arch. This epithet, it

[1] A very good cartouche panel in the writer's possession is reproduced here (Plate XII.). There should be a lion's head in the centre, the mane only of which is left. At Carpenters' Hall are three panels in the same style, one of which has exactly the same light riband work upon it. They are of the date of 1579, and bear the names of the Master and Wardens. Mr. Litchfield reproduces them in his *History of Furniture*, and gives the cost of one of them—materials, 3s.; workmanship, £1, 3s. 4d.

may be as well to explain, is applied to those arches which are not cut in the solid panel, but are so affixed to it as to make it appear as if the panel was slightly recessed. The frequent tooth edging on the lower side or 'soffit' of the arch projects so that the fingers can often pass between the teeth and the panels. In the later seventeenth century style of oak, the arch is still to be seen, but usually it is a shape only incised upon the panel—a mere reminiscence of the architectural shape.

The Bolsover panels have the guilloche upon the front of the arches, as again it may be found on many a bed and cupboard and chest. One of the most magnificent examples of arched panelling still exists in a house built for an unknown Bristol merchant. The 'Red Lodge,' Bristol, has a room with an elaborate corner door such as has been before described. The chimneypiece is supported by Corinthian pillars, and has carved on it large terminal figures and a coat of arms in a large cartouche. The panelling of the room consists of arches planted in, those of the dado being very large. A tall, narrow arch appears in the centre of the door, which is bordered by a heavy gadroon moulding, that shape which is inveterate upon the centre drawers of cabinets and their thick legs. There is also much use of applied round bosses and ovals.

The visitor to Merton College library, which dates from 1376, may see how the decorative scheme of the early seventeenth century suits a Gothic building. There is a large round arch, beneath which one passes, with smaller arches above. The upright pattern, which, as we have seen, runs along the lintels of Apethorpe, here adorns the friezes of bookcases; whilst the gadroon is on cornices and on borders of panels. This room, with its chained books and early architecture, is one of the most interesting in Oxford.

Not so very far from the University is the beautiful

old house of Chastleton, Oxfordshire. The casual visitor may be repelled by the plain severity of its exterior, but the interior is of great interest. Not to mention the long gallery running round the top of the building, there is a drawing-room panelled in the manner I have been describing, and filled with the furniture originally made for the house. Again, on the dado is seen the planted arch, diversified by pilasters at the main windows, with fine scroll-work running up them. Certain additions have been made in the way of portraits fitted into the panelling, which, though not modern, do not help the scheme. Under the ceiling runs the upright ornament of the Apethorpe lintels. The date of this fine old place is 1602, and there exists an inventory of the furniture as it was in the year 1632 (*circa*).

Godinton, in Kent, is an extraordinary storehouse of carved oak, part of which was originally made for the house, while a good deal of early work in the Tudor style has been collected and put up from elsewhere. There is a great staircase, with figures on the newels, and a vine trail just below the handrail, dating from 1628. In the drawing-room a frieze below the cornice has a representation of the old exercises of the militia, showing them with their matchlocks and rests engaged in drill. This is a very exceptional piece of work, to be compared with those figures in full relief, representing various types of General Ireton's army, which adorned the newels of the staircase in the house built for Cromwell's daughter Bridget, whom he married. We are, however, concerned chiefly with the usual and the characteristic, examples of which may be found in this and many another house which there is not space to mention.

After the dissolution of the monasteries, the wealth obtained from which no doubt gave a great impetus to that wave of house-building which ran all over England

at the period we are reviewing, the rage for church building died away. There was, however, no stinting of new church furniture and decoration, so that we find many pulpits dating from the Jacobean period, and screens are also common. As is to be expected, the woodwork of the church is identical with that of the house and its furniture. At Netherbury Church, Dorset, there is a fine octagonal pulpit with two tiers of planted arches and panels with imbricated inlay. At Uppingham Church, Rutland, is a good specimen of a simpler kind.

The very best examples of complete early seventeenth century church woodwork are to be found at Croscombe Church, Somerset, and St. John's Church, Leeds. At Croscombe the planted arch and the S-curve are found upon the pews. The S-curve, the semi-circle pattern, and an interlaced semi-circle pattern also are carved upon the insides of the pew fronts. The reading-desk and pulpit also have the planted arch, with much strapwork and applied diamond shapes. On the screen and in the pulpit canopy appear the pierced steeples and C-curves, just as they are to be seen on the top of the Renaissance house. The upper arches of the screen are double and toothed, and have a pendant between them. The lower arches are plain. The pulpit bears the date of 1616.

St. John's Church, Leeds, is even more interesting from the fact that it was new built in 1631-1633, so that the woodwork may be supposed to have been constructed in a style considered suitable to that of the stone, which is late Gothic. The whole of the pewing has fine panels, carved rails, and turned finials. The splendid original screen has been restored from its old fragments, which were bought up from cottages and other places, to the lasting renown of those who engaged in so appropriate a work. This screen stretches right across the church, and has slender terminal-

shaped pillars, with *appliqué* baluster-work or 'turned half-pendants' upon them. The acanthus is carved on the thick central part of these balusters, which have an acorn-shape at the lower end. The panels of the pews have elaborated S-curves. The turned finials of the pew-ends have thin scores round them, similar in treatment to the pendants of the Yorkshire cabinets (Plates XL., XLI.). These pew-ends might serve as the backs of so many oak chairs, so identical are they in shape to domestic furniture of that kind and period. It is necessary indeed to remind ourselves that old church pews are a very fertile source of made-up furniture. They have been torn out of churches by the hundred, and put by unscrupulous furniture-vampers to uses for which they were never intended.

There are many other churches in the woodwork of which close resemblances may be found to the style of domestic furniture. From those examples which I have mentioned, however, it is possible to get a good notion of the similarity of exterior stone and interior woodwork and furniture motives.

CHAPTER IV

PANELLED ROOMS, BEDSTEADS, AND CRADLES

ROOM panelling was introduced into England, says Mr. J. H. Pollen (*Ancient Furniture and Woodwork*, p. 49), during the reign of Henry III., that king having ordered a room at Windsor Castle to be panelled with Norway pine specially imported. Wainscoting of so early a date—thirteenth century—it would not be easy to find remaining, but we need not travel far for the purpose of studying fine examples of the Tudor period and after. There is no complete room in the Victoria and Albert Museum fitted with the beautiful 'linen-fold' panels, as at Hampton Court or Layer Marney, Essex; or with those heavy diapers which were part of the decoration of the same house. There is, however, one fine piece of linen-fold panelling with diapered or 'dagged' borders (No. 539), from a farm-house at Kingstone, near Taunton, since destroyed. The angular nature of the folds may be seen in the reproduction, and is evidence of its early date in the evolution of this form of panelling (Plate XIII.).

From the Abbey House at Waltham Abbey has come a set of panels (Plate XIV.) of not much later date. This abbey was granted at the Dissolution of the Monasteries by Henry VIII. to Sir Anthony Denny. Early in the seventeenth century Edward Denny, his grandson, Baron of Waltham and Earl of Norwich, is supposed to have used the panelling in a new house

in the abbey grounds. This later house was pulled down in 1770 and the panels placed in a residence in the town. They have profiles of heads in circular medallions. The Tudor rose, portcullis, and the pomegranate of Katharine of Aragon are often repeated, as well as the arms of the Blackett family and others not known. There is much reminiscence of Gothic work in some of the panels, notably where a species of canopy occurs with upright leaves and others at the sides—a version of the 'Tudor flower'—serving as crockets. Other panels have grotesque lions' heads in the same place. Many have purely Renaissance ornaments of dolphins and similar shapes. There are plenty of stone instances of transitional work, Gothic mixed with Renaissance motives, such as this, remaining. Altar tombs of Purbeck marble—Corfe Castle work—show strong Tudor influences as late as 1586. The Clavell tomb at Church Knowle, near Corfe, 1572, another in Milton Abbey, Dorset, to Sir John Tregonwell, 1586, and a third in Bere Regis church, Dorset, name unknown, are three very similar examples showing the combination as clearly as the better-known chantry of Gardiner, 1555, in Winchester Cathedral.

There is considerable variety in the mouldings of the circular medallions of the Waltham panels, and the round-headed arch so characteristic of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods appears in at least one case. The spandrels in this instance contain the usual leaf pattern. The practice of carving heads, often very probably portraits, in profile surrounded by medallions, was popular at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and lasted with gradual deterioration of execution for at least one hundred years. Attention is drawn elsewhere to a cabinet belonging to Sir C. Lawes-Wittewronge entirely decorated in this manner. There is also reproduced in Shaw's *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* a little table with side-flaps which, he says 'may

be regarded as the earliest ornamented table after the revival of the arts' (Plate xix. p. 39). Upon its deep and heavy frame is carved a head in a medallion. This table was exhibited at Gore House in 1862, and then belonged to Mr. J. Swaby. A photograph of it was made, and should still be obtainable from the Board of Education.[1]

No Gothic reminiscences affect the panelling (Nos. 4870-4881) from a room in an old house at Exeter, dating from 1550-1575 *circa*.[2] In this example the ornament is confined to the frieze, pilasters, and stiles, the panels being plain, and, as Mr. Litchfield in his *History of Furniture* suggests, was probably made locally for the house. Where the decoration is on the opposite principle—plain framing and decorated panels—the ornament may have been brought from a distance and fitted in only by Devon workmen. There is no doubt that much woodwork was in this way used from abroad, and the jealousy of native carvers was freely expressed against those Italian and Flemish workmen who spread the Renaissance style over England. The moulding of the panel stiles is a very typically English one, but it is considered by some writers, amongst whom is Mr. W. Bliss Sanders, that the decoration was imported. He reproduces in his *Half-Timbered Houses and Carved Woodwork* two chimneypieces from Aubourn Hall, Lincolnshire, one of which, with planted arches, is rough and English, in his opinion. The other, with similarly disposed mouldings on its panels, but with finer carving, he considers foreign. It is possible to go too far in claiming all that is uncouth as English, and attributing all delicacy to foreigners. A consideration of the execution of some of the Winchester Cathedral chantries, presumably by English hands, and the fact that the names of Henry VIII.'s carvers at Hampton Court were very many of them English, is sufficient to give us pause.

[1] It is now in the possession of Lord de Lisle and Dudley. [2] Plate xv.

In this particular instance, however, the work is purely Renaissance, a style which came not naturally to English fingers in the first instance, if the 'bad Italian' of the Gardiner chantry at Winchester is any guide. It may be observed that very similar flower and scroll work is to be found on the beautiful silver-gilt salver of Flemish make, dating about 1660, in the museum. Lions' heads divide the frieze at intervals, and cupids and satyrs are a frequent decoration. The whole is highly elaborate, as befitted a good house in what has been called the 'Capital of the West,' yet the plain panels prevent the scheme from appearing overdone. This is a not uncommon fault in work of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods.

The third and most complete specimen of room panelling in the museum is very satisfactory in this respect. The 'Inlaid Room' from Sizergh Castle, Westmorland, is more severe in spite of its wood inlay than that from Exeter.[1] This room is complete except for its chimneypiece, which was not purchased. It has, however, been reproduced, so that the effect may be fairly seen. The room is about 23 feet square by 12½ feet high. The panelling is of oak unpolished, and of a beautiful light tone. It is inlaid with darker 'bog' oak and holly. There is a considerable amount of straight strap-work in the inlay. The upper portion of the panelling has arcading of round arches. The pilasters have Ionic capitals. The lower part, or dado, is divided into panels by mouldings. At the top and the bottom and along the middle run horizontal bands of geometrical inlay. The room has a corner door, each of its three sides having, above, an arched compartment containing a lion's mask, and being flanked by fluted Ionic columns. The cove at the top of the door is surmounted by a naked boy. The exact date at which the 'Inlaid Room' at Sizergh was made is

[1] Plate xvi.

not known, but the nature of the inlay would place it at about 1570 or perhaps a few years later.

Not to be missed is the fourth series of panelling of a room with fireplace, from Bromley Place, Bromley-by-Bow, demolished in 1894. The date of this is 1606, and though the panels are plain, there are good strap-work and carved patterns on the framing.

The four-post bedstead seems next to deserve attention, if size is to be the criterion. Specimens of the Tudor period in a complete condition are few. In Shaw's *Specimens* there is an engraving of one of the period of Henry VIII., which, at the time of publishing, belonged to the Rev. W. Allen of Lovely Hall, near Blackburn. It had lost its cornice, but the pillars and panelling were of perfect Tudor design. The pillars show to perfection that exact relationship of exterior architectural design to the patterns of furniture upon which stress has been laid in the chapter on the Renaissance house. They are decorated with a small hexagonal strap-work. Any one acquainted with Tonbridge School, Kent, date 1560 *circa*, will remember there an old chimney, figured by Parker in his *Glossary of Architecture* (vol. ii. plate 33), exhibiting this hexagonal pattern, and similar mouldings, at the top and base. The resemblance between the bed-post and the chimney is practically complete, the former appearing like two of the latter joined together. The panelling of the bed-head contained fine diapered and scroll decoration of the period.

An illustration is given of a fragment from the Victoria and Albert Museum (No. 834).[1] It is the end of a bed consisting of four panels decorated with the linen-fold pattern. At either side is a post carved with baluster ornament enriched with leaves, one post being surmounted with an eagle, the symbol of St. John the Evangelist. The other three, no doubt, originally existed to give force to the familiar rhyming

[1] Plate XVII.

invocation to 'Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.' We learn from the records of Hampton Court that Wolsey had 280 beds, mostly hung with silk. The hangings would slide on rings on an iron rod. Sometimes the rod, with a frame to sustain it, was on one or three sides of the bed, and there was no tester above. Not till the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was much expense incurred on the framework: the hangings, as later in Queen Anne's time, were all in all. Mr. J. H. Pollen reproduces (*Furniture and Woodwork*, p. 118) an old drawing of a bed in which a draped tester is slung by cords from the ceiling. The curtain would not be fastened round a post during the day, but hoisted out of reach. With the introduction of elaborately framed and posted beds this custom must have disappeared. The mattresses of these beds were placed upon interlaced cording running through holes in the framing, and consisted of rush matting, if we may judge from an old example preserved in the 'Strangers' Hall' at Norwich.[1]

Describing a bed belonging to Dr. Robertson at Buxton, a writer in the *Building News*, January 20, 1882, remarks: 'A second frieze has been added to increase the height, and the bases of the footposts have been lengthened for the same reason. This is often the case with old beds made to suit Tudor manor-houses with low rooms. A careful examination of the foot or side-posts of an old bedstead will generally show the height to which it has been raised.' A small shelf was sometimes set at the head of the bed. Many old beds have their panels scorched by the candle placed on it. Chaucer in the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* writes:—

> 'For him was lever have at his beddes heed
> Twenty bookes, clothed in blak and reed.'

Sometimes a cupboard in the bed-head held a shrine.

[1] For details of bedding before 1577 see Harrison's *Description of England*, 'On the Manner of Building and Furniture of our Houses.'

Of Elizabethan beds there are two examples in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The most grandiose (Plate XVIII.) is that which was made for one of the Courtenay family, whose arms are placed upon the frieze of the tester or canopy over the bed-foot. This bed is a mixture of the characteristic and the unusual. Above the tester projects the ostrich feather crest of the family, and flanking it at the corners are huge grotesque heads. On the three open under-sides of the tester are rows of pendants set at regular intervals. The bed-foot rises in a variously curved pyramidal shape, and the pillars which support the tester rest upon four S-curved carved brackets. All these points mark this example as being peculiar. On the other hand, in the detail of the carving it has very much which is highly characteristic of its date of 1593. This bed is as useful as can be for familiarising us with those patterns which, in the chapter on the Renaissance house, I have mentioned as occurring, some of them, outside and in. In the first place, the upper part of the bed-head displays the planted arch as it appears on 'The Feathers' at Ludlow and other places mentioned. Below there is a range of panels, and then comes a border of continuous semi-circles, repeated also, the other way up, on a border of the bed-foot, between the great supporting pedestals of the pillars. This semi-circle or fan pattern, as I have described it in the chapter on the Renaissance house, appears either singly or in continuity over and over again on cabinets, chests, chairs, or tables. Quite as common are the S-curves which run below the before-mentioned border on the bed-foot, or are joined and opposed in pairs on the large panels of the pedestals. The lowest set of panels on the bed-head are ornamented with large diamonds—a particularly favourite shape for panelling of bed-testers and fronts of chests. Finally, the stiles which separate these diamond-carved panels have the upright leaf, with

many branches or serrations, which is also extremely general.

What with grotesque masks and figures and S-brackets, the effect given by this bed, which is a large one, 8 feet 7½ inches high, is one of too great elaboration. The huge heads at the top are no improvement to the design, in which a little more of unornamental surface is to be desired. The slender pillars contrast too suddenly with the huge drum-shaped members on which they rest, and seem calculated to let the upper millstone of the canopy crash down upon the nether one of the bed.[1]

Compare this bed in these respects with the next example, of exactly the same date, 1593. The pillars of this are tapered gradually so as to show no painful contrast with the 'bulbs' or drums. There is a happier proportion between the pedestals and the pillars above them, and the only crying defect of design is the large size of the shallow capitals, which seem to be flattened by the weight of the cornice. There is a sobriety about this bed which we miss in the other, and there is not that odd mixture of the classical with a grotesque which is not classical, but decidedly barbaric. It has some inlay upon it.

A lesson, too, in characteristic ornaments may be here again learned. On the frieze of the tester appears that 'upright' ornament which, in the chapter on the Renaissance house, I have noticed as decorating the lintels of the windows of Apethorpe House, Northamptonshire (Plate XIX.).

The bulbs or drums have gadroon ornaments—swelling pear shapes—as upon the Griffin monument in Braybrook Church, Northants. The bed-head has the planted arch and the 'upright leaf' on the stiles.

The Sizergh Castle bed is inlaid in the same style

[1] The arrangement and proportions of the panels and stiles of the lower head-board, if original, are certainly unfortunate.

as the room. It has Corinthian capitals on its pillars, which are fluted and reeded. There are eight terminal figures, rather grotesque, on the bed-head. On the foot end of the tester mermaids are carved in full relief, supporting a coat of arms. The panels and frieze are inlaid with the S-curve in light wood. There are six planted arches in the bed-head, with inlaid panels.

A bed dated 1590, with initials T. B. and M. B. on the bed-head, is in the possession of Mr. J. Tubb, Clarensdean, Roehampton, Surrey. It comes from Warborough, near Wallingford, where it was bought in 1823 by the grandfather of its present owner. Its three planted arches at the bed-head are nicely inlaid with the familiar pattern of the flower in a vase for the centre panel, and architectural inlay recalling that on the Bed of Ware, to which reference is made later on, for the other two. There are four of the usual terminal figures on the stiles. The pillars are gadrooned on the top and bottom of the bulb, whilst the narrower parts are fluted and reeded above, and fluted only below. The capitals are simply a square abacus with a dental course round them. The canopy is heavily panelled underneath with a guilloche ornament on the stiles. There is a centre panel with a heavy gadrooned moulding. The middle of this panel is peculiar. It is not inlaid in the usual manner, but filled with a composition showing a curiously contorted 'figuring,' said to be made of compressed shavings. This is to be found again upon three shallow long panels above the arches of the bed-head. The cornice of the canopy has a plain guilloche without the intervening circle, and is finished with an ogee-shaped moulding decorated with the acanthus leaf.

Plate xx. represents a good specimen of a fairly ornate class, and such as would be found in a superior farm or small manor-house. It belongs to Mr. J. E. Clifton, Old Bank House, Swanage, Dorset, and was made for Luke's Farm, near Romsey, Hants,

whence it has but recently been removed, and where is still some of the original furniture. The pillars of this bed have not the huge drum of the specimen previously described. The under-side of the tester has a closely twisted guilloche on the stiles of the panels, which have large incised and bordered diamonds upon them. The bed-head has a frieze with large ornamental S-curves. Below this is a dental course and two narrow panels, divided and ended by three grotesque heads in relief. Below these are two panels, separated and flanked by three pairs of applied pilasters. A noticeable feature on each of the panels is a five-sided piece of wood an inch thick, with very grotesque profile heads wearing caps. The date of this bed, judging from the applied pilasters, may be placed well in the seventeenth century, and we may regard it as a transition from the earlier ones described to the next one, which may perhaps be not later than 1640. This bed, the property of Miss Evans, of Forde Abbey, is very interesting, though much simpler in carving than the rest. It is a proof that there was no sudden leap from the stuff-hung carved bed to the four-posted, disguised prop of textiles or embroideries (Plate XXI.). The woodwork of the panels is undecorated, and there are very slim poles for pillars. The only carved ornament is a border along the rail of the bed-post of the short upright flute pattern, somewhat as found on the lintels of Apethorpe. The great feature is the stuff decoration. At the corners of the tester are large pineapple-shaped projections or finials covered with velvet—the precursors of the huge plume erections of the early eighteenth century.[1] A deep ornamented fringe hangs from the tester, the whole cornice of which is covered with velvet, and there are curtains at each corner of the bed. It is said that it is part of a suite which was prepared for the reception of Queen Anne when she visited Forde Abbey. Other objects were a settee, chair,

[1] Plumes were also used in the seventeenth century. See p. 65.

and stool, all in the style of Charles II., and covered with Mortlake tapestry.

Reference must here be made to that celebrated monstrosity—size alone being considered—the 'Great Bed of Ware.' It is rendered famous by Shakespeare's allusion to it in *Twelfth Night*. Formerly in the 'Saracen's Head' at Ware, it is now at Rye House, a short distance away. The panelled head of the bed has two large arches planted in, with terminal figures between them, and on their outsides. These figures are enclosed between fluted columns, whilst the extreme edges of the bed-head are shaped with heads and leaf decoration in profile. The pillars of the bed-foot are very heavy and decorative. A box base supports four light plain columns, with one in the centre space. Above there are arches and a light frieze. On the platform, supported by these columns and arches, is the heavy part of the pillar. A huge bulb, covered with acanthus leaves, upholds a smaller shape of the same kind; and above this again, to support the heavy cornice of the bed-top, is a round pillar latticed with strap-work. An illustration of this huge piece of furniture is to be found in Shaw's *Specimens of Ancient Furniture*, where are also three other fine specimens of Henry VIII., James I., and Charles I. respectively. A peculiarity of the bed of Ware is that the thick, round and but slightly tapering pillars which support the cornice have no capitals, but fit into the corners of the tester inside the frieze. This, if the original arrangement, is certainly a defect of design. While much of the ornament is peculiar, yet a good deal of it is very characteristic. On the frieze of the cornice is the running pattern formed of alternate squares and circles joined by a straight strap which we so often find on table frames, and which is on one of the chests illustrated from Newton Manor, Dorset.[1] On the inside of the self-same frieze is the 'upright ornament' on a large

[1] Plate XXXI.2.

scale, and similar to that on the lintels at Apethorpe, Northamptonshire. The usual large diamond appears on the box bases of the pillars at the bed-foot. Exceptional decoration is that of the buildings with front pavement in perspective, which appear on the panels enclosed by the great arches of the bed-head. Between these arches and the top of the tester are two long panels containing a peculiar kind of guilloche pattern of rectangles in sets of three, one above the other, and joined by a very tightly twisted strap. Finally, there is a pretty variation upon the common dental course in the highest member of the cornice. It consists of a series of shapes pointed, somewhat like a broad canine tooth, on their under-sides. The size of this famous bed is about twelve feet square, and thus in *Twelfth Night*, III. 2, does Sir Toby Belch refer to it, anent Sir Andrew Aguecheek's challenge to 'the Count's youth':

'Go, write it in a martial hand; be curst and brief; it is no matter how witty, so it be eloquent and full of invention: taunt him with the license of ink: if thou *thou'st* him some thrice, it shall not be amiss; and as many lies as will lie in thy sheet of paper, although the sheet were big enough for the bed of Ware in England, set 'em down.'

Turning to Shaw once again, from Goodrich Court, Herefordshire, we find reproduced a bed-head which perfectly suggests the upper part of a Jacobean mansion. There is the open work with its finials surmounting two large planted arches, and below there is a balustrade such as might grace a Renaissance house-top, stretching across the whole bed. It consists of twelve rails divided by three broad stiles with lions' heads above them. This bed (Shaw, plate 38) has no tester. Its posts are of a dark foreign wood, the bed-head being of lighter material inlaid with mother-of-pearl. In the want of a tester it resembles the Charles I.

bed, dated 1628, on the next plate. This latter bed has no pillars, but only large finials surrounded with the steeple shape of outside work. The bed-head is of remarkable form. There is one planted arch with a triangular pediment above, and on this a species of shield flanked by dolphins and supporting a cherub's head—that cherub's head which we are soon to find on the chairs of Charles II. The arch and pediment are supported on either side by large S-curved brackets shaped into dragons' heads and tails, and entwined with acanthus flowers which the dragons hold in their beaks. These brackets remind us of those supporting the pillars in the Courtenay bed in the Victoria and Albert Museum. A long panel above the arch has a guilloche with the small intervening circles and 'faggot' shapes above and below them, similar to those on a box in the writer's possession, illustrated amongst the specimens of the 'guilloche.' In the arch is a shield suspended by carved rings and bearing the date of 1628. Another long panel going right across the bed-head has alternate rectangles and ovals, somewhat as on the bed of Ware. The bedposts are finished with the steeple finial.

That indefatigable observer, John Evelyn, notes, November 2, 1644, how a Genoese, Cardinal Doughi, travels 'in great state with his owne bedstead and all the furniture.' Doubtless this was a bedstead for travelling purposes, but probably elaborate enough, for rich Italians were accustomed to lie on very fine monuments of this kind. On November 10th of the same year, Evelyn remarks upon a splendid bed at 'Prince Ludovisio's villa.' 'But what,' he says, 'some look upon as exceeding all the rest is a very rich bedstead (which sort of grosse furniture the Italians much glory in, as formerly did our grand-fathers in England in their inlaid wooden ones) inlaid with all sorts of precious stones and antiq heads, onyxs, achates, and cornelians,

esteem'd to be worth 80 or 90,000 crownes.' Evelyn must be referring in his comparison to beds of 1570 or later. The Sizergh Castle bed is probably something of the kind, though there is nothing remarkably elaborate in the inlay of that beautiful room and its bed. Other specimens of inlaid beds are far to seek, if they still exist. Long wear and tear have probably accounted for most of them; the strength of these sombre old four-posters was sometimes put to a test which was grim enough. Evelyn relates how his friend, the Lord Treasurer Clifford, tried to hang himself from the bed-tester, August 18, 1673. There was another reason why wooden beds with many joints should have fallen into disuse. Evelyn mentions, September 29, 1645, another Italian bedstead all inlaid with 'achats, chrystals, cornelians, lazuli, etc., esteem'd worth 16,000 crowns; but for the most part,' he adds, 'the bedsteads in Italy are of forged iron gilded, since it is impossible to keep the wooden ones from the chimices.' By chimices he means certain parasites with which even in England we are not unacquainted. Damp and the action of direct sunlight are, between them, no doubt responsible for the disappearance of many a fine four-poster. When it became shabby the bedstead on which the lord of the manor had slept, or in which his sons and daughters had been born, would be relegated, as was the custom with other antiquated furniture, to the tender mercies of the grooms and footmen in the garrets.

From the *Memoirs of the Verney Family* are to be gathered certain interesting facts as to panelled rooms and beds. The use of wainscot was regarded as so important that it is specifically granted in a lease of 1634 referring to a house in Covent Garden (vol. i. p. 5). It may be that people took a fancy to good panelling, just as nowadays they have been known to replace fine marble chimneypieces of the Adam period with modern rubbish, and spirit the originals away. The remedy is

found in a special photograph and description appended to the base of any chimneypiece which has the merits of a work of art.[1] 'Stock locks' upon doors were also a luxury. At the Verneys' house at Claydon they were kept loose 'in the closet.' Doors were, however, found to be so much injured by the perpetual taking off and putting on of locks that it was better at last to make them fixtures. To this original custom we may, perhaps, attribute the very frequent occurrence upon oak chests and boxes of locks which were obviously not suited to the original design. Very often the later lock plate is much too large, and actually covers part of the design. A box or chest, therefore, which has its original lock and plate made to suit it is a rarity and a desideratum.

The habit of putting almost everything in mourning on the occasion of a death seems to have been very prevalent during the seventeenth century. In the *Verney Memoirs* (vol. i. p. 293), we find mention, 1640 *circa*, of a great black bed with hangings at Claydon, which Sir Ralph Verney sympathetically offers to a Mrs. Eure, on the death of her husband, as the only consolation within his means. 'This great black bed,' says the writer, 'with its impressive amplitude of gloom, travels about the family whenever a death occurs, till the very mention of it gives one a feeling of suffocation.' In vol. ii. p. 15, we meet it again, or else another 'that my father borrowed,' says Sir Ralph, 'of my aunt Eure,' and which she caused Sir Ralph to buy for her at her husband's death, when the whole room was hung with black and the furniture covered with it. Forty years later the custom still prevailed, along with the promiscuous distribution of mourning rings to most members of a family. With all this demand for hangings it is not surprising to find amongst the names of rooms at Claydon both 'a little' and 'great Frippery.'

It is convenient here to mention the great upholstered

[1] See Appendix, Note III.

beds of the succeeding period, but few of which remain. To French fashions must be attributed the abnormal development of hangings which caused woodwork almost entirely to disappear from view. The French had half a dozen names for as many different types of bedstead. To suit the enormously increased height of rooms, the proportions of the bedstead were increased, until some specimens seem to be from sixteen to eighteen feet high, perhaps more. Hampton Court Palace is a place to view these monstrosities.

In the 'Queen Anne's State Bedchamber' is her very tall, straight-canopied four-poster, completely covered with silk velvet, worked with an elaborate pattern of architectural designs, and conventional vases and flowers in orange and crimson on a white ground. On the corners of the canopy or tester are two great urns also covered with velvet. In the Private Dining-Room are now placed the beds of William and Mary. William's is in crimson damask, and has urns on its handsomely shaped canopy. The bed-head is formed to match. Mary's bed is crimson velvet with a straight top and urns, with the huge dust-collecting feathers characteristic of the time. Between them is a much smaller bed, four square, with straight canopy, and covered with crimson damask. This belonged to George II. Beds such as those of William owe their design probably to Daniel Marot. At Warwick Castle there is said to be a bedstead of Queen Anne's reign, and a marquetry one of the same period has been mentioned as existing at Brigstock Manor, Northants, in 1883. Two stuff-hung earlier beds should be noted. At Hardwick Hall is a Bed of State with cloth of gold and silver, velvets of different colours, lace fringes and embroidery. The hangings, as described by the author of *Vitruvius Britannicus*, consist of figures representing the virtues and vices embroidered on grounds of white and black velvet. In the 'Spangle Bedroom' at Knole,

containing furniture presented by James I. to the Earl of Middlesex, there is a tall upholstered bed with a straight-topped tester.

Of the early slung form of cradles, mention has been made in Chapter II. In the seventeenth century the preference seems to have been for a box shape on rockers. There may or may not be a gabled hood. Of those illustrated, the most elaborate belongs to Mr. R. D. Radcliffe, Old Swan, Liverpool, and has up to the present time been lent to the Victoria and Albert Museum. It is said to have been the cradle of the Earl of Derwentwater. It has a pentagonal hood finished with rather plain turned finials, which are repeated on the cradle foot. The panels are incised with a species of interlacing semicircle pattern. Various interesting additions seem to have been made of later date. The ornamental 'foliation' moulding which runs along the upper rail and down the uprights is perhaps an after-thought, as also seems to be the pierced carving which supports the Prince of Wales's feathers above the hood. At the cradle foot is a large escutcheon formed of cherubs supporting a coronet, and having a monogram and fruit carved in the field, all of which is apparently subsequent to the execution of the original cradle. The hood has open sides (Plate XXII.1).

Another (Plate XXII.2) in the Museum collection has closed sides but no top. The panels are plain except on the hood, where are ornamentally carved, on the back, the initials G.B.M.B., on one side 'October 14 Dai,' and on the other '1641.' A special interest attaches to cradles by reason of the precise information of ownership and date so often carved upon them. In the Dorchester Museum is a rather plain one lent by Mr. Albert Bankes, which came from a house at Corfe. Its inscription is a very full one: IOHN VPPILL BORNE NOVEMBER 11TH ANO DOM 1674. Its hood is missing.

The third illustration[1] (No. 596, V. and A. Museum)

[1] Plate XXII.3.

has a gabled hood with balusters at the sides. This hood, it may be noticed, is hinged for lifting up, and the panel below is also fitted with a bolt. A very well carved 'fan' pattern appears on the gable end, and below it are the initials E. M. G., 1691. Assuming this to be an authentic date, we have here a good example of the persistence of the traditional shapes and ornament of old oak furniture. Except, perhaps, for the shapes of the turning, this example might have been made at least fifty years before. Cradles of later date than these may be discoverable, but they would not appear to be very common. The writer has not met with anything in the shape of a cradle upholstered like a bed of Queen Anne's time.

As to the general furnishing of bedrooms in the seventeenth century, a good idea may be obtained from the following extract from an inventory of the household goods Mr. Serjeant Newdegate left with his son at Arbury, Warwickshire, in March 1666. I am indebted for it to Lady Newdigate-Newdegate's *Cavalier and Puritan*. 'The great chamber was hung with 5 pieces of Landskipp hangings,' and there was 'a very large Bedstead with embroidered curtains and valence of broadcloth, lined with carnation-coloured sarsenet, and 7 plumes of feathers in the bedtester.' This shows that the feather-furnishings were anterior to the reign of Queen Anne or William III., when they are supposed to have been introduced. There were also 'two embroidered carpets' (tablecloths), 'two armed chairs, four stools embroidered, suitable to the bed . . . a looking-glass embroidered with gold, and another looking-glass, six flower-pots, two stands, and a hanging shelf, all gilt; a pair of brass andirons, . . . a picture over the chimney, and carpets round the bed. . . .'

CHAPTER V

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY CHESTS

VERY few chests are to be found to bridge the interval between those with the genuine early linen-fold and the typical chest of the seventeenth century, with the round arch planted on its panels. A most beautiful one, in which there is some approach to the flowing style of the Renaissance, is still to be seen in Shanklin Church, Isle of Wight. Reproduced in Plate XXIII., it is of great interest as an instance of the ornamental use of initial lettering. It has also the invaluable addition of a date besides the name of the owner. He was Thomas Silksted, Prior of Winchester from 1498 to 1524, whose chantry and wooden pulpit are there to be seen. His name is carved in bold lettering on the top rail of the chest. On the upright borders, at the ends, are the words '*Dominus*' and 'Prior.' The lower rail is inscribed in abbreviation '*Anno Domini*,' and '1519.' With the exception of the space for a large lock-plate, and for the arms of the Priory—a sword and double key crossed—the rest of the front within the border is taken up by the large ornamental letters 'T. S.,' gracefully adorned with Tudor roses and other conventional flower shapes. I refer elsewhere to the use of lettering as ornament. This chest is a good example of letter decoration, and is one of the few remaining pieces of furniture of early date which may almost be classed as domestic. A chalice, however, carved on its right-

hand border is sufficient to remind us, with the Prior's name and arms, of its ecclesiastical affinities. In construction it resembles the Dersingham chest, the front consisting of two horizontal planks. The original top is missing. It is curious that very deep-set panels seem to appear later on chests than they do on cupboards and buffets. Quite heavily moulded panels are to be seen on the latter, as, for instance, in the two fine examples belonging to Mr. Edward Barry, of Ockwells Manor, Bray.

A very good example of the unpanelled chest exists at Cottingham Church, Northants. This, as will be observed in Plate XXIV., is unlike any other of our types. It is large and massive, top and front being composed each of one huge plank about 1½ inches thick. The length of the chest is about 5 feet 2 inches. From back to front it is about 26 inches, and in extreme height about 33 inches. The ornamentation, confined entirely to the front, is curious. Upon the main part it runs in three bands, the uppermost of which is a species of Tudor cresting, formed chiefly of single four-petalled roses, which are also sowed between, three in a row, one above the other. Next comes a waved trail, the spaces on each side of which are filled with double five-petalled roses and triplets of leaves. The lowest and broadest band is composed of three large five-petalled double roses, three double-headed spread-eagles, and two 'whorls.' These last may remind us of one of the circular ornaments of the Stoke d'Abernon chest. Besides these details, which are somewhat promiscuously arranged, there is still a small space left; and this, to be seen next to the rose on the end of the chest on the spectator's right, is filled up with rough window tracery of a perpendicular character. The design, thus quaintly eked out, is not that of a great artist, but is, so far as the writer is aware, decidedly unique. The date seems to be of the late

fifteenth century, when the eagle is found upon embroideries, *e.g.* a frontal from Baunton. It also appears upon the arms of Mary and Philip, 1553-1558, to which date the rather debased style of carving might incline some to assign the chest.[1] It is of interest to note that schoolboys have tried their knives upon the lid, leaving initials and dates, E. S., 1619, and W. C., 1725.

The present rector of Cottingham, to whom the credit is due of rescuing this interesting object from the rubbish-heap, discovered in it two small documents, both dated. One referred to a transfer of a plot of land on April 14, 1602; the other to a rate for the repair of the church, dated 1664. The list of names includes a majority still belonging to inhabitants of Cottingham. The presence of these documents is of course no evidence of the date of the chest, but the dates cut on the lid leave little doubt, even if the style of the ornament did not lead us to the conclusion, that the sixteenth century was not very old when this chest was made. Of the two locks, that on the left has a keyhole cover similar to those on another chest belonging to the same church. This is of the iron-bound type, with crossing straps, heavy handles at each end, and three locks, each with keyhole covers. It is interesting to verify from this chest, which has all its ironwork complete, the custom of covering these iron-bound chests with leather. Similar chests exist at Hambleton Church and South Luffenham Church, both in Northamptonshire. The latter is a very massive 'tree-trunk' example, with a flat top, and bound round with five strong bands of iron, which show as uprights on the front. Another is in Garway Church. Such uncouth objects are probably not earlier than the sixteenth century. A chest, plated with iron and iron-bound, at Rockingham Castle, has flowers and the arms of England and Nuremberg upon

[1] Considerations of general shape and construction point to the earlier date, and the style of carving may be due to a village carver.

it, and is said to belong to the reign of Henry v. The more famous one in the same place, locally known as 'King John's money-box,' has a domed top, like some of the tree-trunk chests. It is quite undecorated.

A somewhat problematical chest in the Victoria and Albert Museum (No. 833), said to be of the first half of the sixteenth century, offers an example of the fashion of carving heads in profile upon panels of rooms, cupboards, and chests. This style, as we have seen in the chapter on panelling and bedsteads, was in vogue in the reign of Henry VII. and Henry VIII. A very fine early example exists at Louth Church in Lincolnshire, carved with the portraits of Henry VII. and his wife on each of the cupboard doors of what is known as 'Sudbury's Hutch.' It is very interesting from various points of view as retaining its original ironwork, and having also something of a history. It is particularly noticeable that the heads are carved in round arches, with exactly the same style of ornament in the spandrels as may be found upon later work. We have there, in fact, a precursor of the arched panel which was to become so prevalent at the end of the sixteenth and in the seventeenth centuries. The chest in the Victoria and Albert Museum has very grotesque and roughly carved heads, not comparable for character with those of the Louth cupboard, or to be mentioned in the same breath with the excellent profiles in circular medallions upon the panelling from Waltham Abbey. Profile heads are found upon Elizabethan and Jacobean furniture, but are very rough. An example may be seen on the head of the bed illustrated in Plate xx., and belonging to Mr. J. E. Clifton, with which those on this chest may usefully be compared (Plate xxv.).

In the most grandiose style of English carving is the chest with symbolical figures, 'Fides' and 'Patiencia,' belonging to Mr. Seymour Lucas, R.A. This has its arches containing the figures divided by

terminal busts. The shortness and heaviness of these, and the fruits in relief, suggest a Flemish or German influence, but the arches and their spandrels are characteristically English. Exceptional features are the decoration of the ends and the solid iron handles. There is a massive, architectural character about this specimen which entirely differentiates it from the flatter-fronted incised chests of the seventeenth century. Its date is probably much the same as that of the Courtenay bed, and the other one with flattened capitals in the Victoria and Albert Museum, about 1590. The illustration of it speaks for itself. On the long, inscribed panel, between the lions' heads, is to be noticed a fleur-de-lys shape, which is a common ornament of panels of the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century; and to break the long line of the edge of the panels are small raised semi-circles completely characteristic of the method of filling up the pattern in a certain type of S-curve panel. It may be seen upon No. 2 in the series of S-curve illustrations, whilst the fleur-de-lys may be noticed upon No. 4 (Plate VIII.).

The lighting of the reproduction is to be remarked. It would be impossible to set off better the bold effect of relief and the vigorous carving of this important example, which has been photographed under the happiest circumstances. A piece of furniture, like a picture, appears at its best in a certain light and shade, and in many cases the carver intended it so to do. This consideration will account for the disappointment which observers of this point experience when they see a fine chimneypiece or cabinet taken from its original situation and placed in a new light—full facing a window, for instance—which conceals instead of revealing its inherent beauty.

It is rather difficult to assign a date to the somewhat rare type of chest owned by Mr. Seymour Lucas,

R.A., and called a 'Nonesuch' chest. The front of this is entirely covered with marquetry of the most beautifully mellow tone. It recalls the appearance of those faded straw boxes which have become brown with age, and are more æsthetically pleasing than they ever could have been when they were new. When we proceed to consider the subject of this marquetry, we perceive that the whole is architectural in character with the exception of certain borderings. A central stile divides the front into two panels, each of which has three subdivisions. Each of these subdivisions, six in all, contains a quaint building, with a pedimented porch, tall castellations, and a high-pitched roof, surmounted by a cupola and steeples. A flagstaff on the summit of the cupola shows a triangular flag or vane blowing out straight in the wind. On the three stiles are octagonal towers, fancifully chequered, and with eight-sided steeple roofs. They are in very acute perspective, being drawn as if viewed from high above. As an edging above and below the main panels there are rows of windows with triangular pediments. A border, intended perhaps to represent round billets, like those of Norman architecture, strung through their centres with a cord which shows between them, each billet being alternated with a disc, separates the subdivisions of the panels, and also runs along the edge of the lid and of the outer stiles. There is also considerable use of a bordering of small chequers. The decoration of this extremely quaint and beautifully toned chest is meant for a rough representation of the wonderful palace of Nonesuch, built by Henry VIII. in 1537. Lady Castlemaine, to whom Charles II. gave it in 1670, pulled it down. Both Pepys and Evelyn saw it, and describe some of its features. To judge from Hoefnagle's print, it must have been an extremely picturesque place. There are huge octagonal towers at each end, the upper parts much overhanging the

lower, and these are crowned with numerous steeples, and flags or vanes, as in the chest. The proportions of the building are not adhered to in the marquetry, but it seems obvious that it is meant for a representation of this lost palace. We shall perhaps not be far wrong in assigning this chest to the extreme end of the sixteenth century and a date of 1580 or 1590 (Plate XXVII.).

Not of a much later period is another chest with handsomely inlaid panels, the centre one containing a swan in light wood, which also belongs to Mr. Seymour Lucas, R.A. The carving of the framing of this chest is remarkably easy-flowing and well designed, whilst a special and rare feature is the ornamental S-curved brackets at each end of the lower rail (Plate XXVIII.1).

The date of 'about 1500' is assigned to a chest (No. 7270) in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which has curiously flattened curves to its nearly round arches. It is difficult to agree to so early a date as that assigned to it, though it is to be noticed that in the spandrels there is the familiar leafage so characteristic of English oakwork, and to be seen on those of the cupboard above mentioned at Louth, which is undoubtedly early sixteenth century, if not even late fifteenth. All the rest of the ornament of this chest is typical of the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, the guilloche on upper and lower rails and pillars, the formal acanthus leaf upon the stiles, and the geometrical inlay, which somewhat spoils the effect of the panels. There is a double grooved line on the lower edge, which is very likely a restoration. On the two end panels are the letters T and S, and the chest is stated to have come from the Palace, Bishopthorpe, York. Its carving, though unambitious, is good and sharp, and superior to that of No. 1390, which again shows us the arch planted in. This is a rather over-florid specimen, with panels on which are carved

conventional flowers growing out of clumsily shaped vases, a motive more beautifully expressed by inlay, in which it is not uncommonly found. On the upper rail is the S-curve, whilst the lower rail has a rather too prominent turned moulding, suggestive of a date on the later side of 1650. At the bottom, above this moulding, are two doors, with a drawer between. The chest of drawers did not spring into existence, as we have it in all its varieties, on a sudden. It was the result of a tentative process which was gradually developed as it dawned upon our ancestors how inconvenient it was to rout the whole chest out in the search after some article hidden at the bottom. This chest, therefore, is interesting as an example of the development of the chest of drawers from the coffer; and the same may be said of No. 654, which has some peculiarities of its own, and is in a better style of art. It is 'a throwing back' to the early fashion of chest without panelling, but with its ornament incised on the plain plank. We have the guilloche on each side of an elegantly designed, conventional 'upright flower' pattern, whilst under the incised arches are very bold and handsome roses. This chest was intended perhaps to partake of the nature of a strong-box, which might account for its solid plank construction. The ends slide in grooves, and, when drawn up, show two drawers beneath a false bottom. The arches being only incised, not planted in, would tend to show that the date is well towards the middle of the seventeenth century, but the style of work makes it, for a late chest, very attractive (Plates XXVIII.2, XXIX.1 and 2).

Leaving now the arched panelled chests, we come to a very florid one (No. 527), which has the additional interest of bearing its owner's name and a date. On the upper rail is inscribed, 'This is Esther Hobsonne ('s) Chist 1637.' The last word, by the way, should settle for us whether chest or coffer is the best

appellation for this kind of furniture. Esther Hobsonne's has a waved pattern or conventional vine-trail on its upper rail and inner stiles, which seems to me to be a reminiscence, though feeble indeed compared with the earlier work, of the beautiful undercut vine-trails of Gothic church carving. The two centre panels of the front have a version of that upright and branching flower pattern, which is so common on cabinets and chair-backs of this period. It is curious that the lid of this chest, with so over-elaborate a front, should be a smooth one. Artistically considered, the design would have been the better for some plain spaces either on stiles or panels; but the Jacobean carver seems to have had a prejudice in favour of neglecting the ends and tops of chests, and heaping his whole repertoire of patterns on to the front (Plate XXIX.3).

There is some ground for the conclusion that the panelled lid is more common in the Midlands and North of England, and the smooth lid in the South. It is impossible to dogmatise upon the question without precise data of a large number of chests whose 'provenance' is thoroughly well known. These articles of furniture have been so much moved about by dealers and purchasers that in all parts of the country they are to be found with both smooth and panelled lids; but experience of a considerable number of which it may be said, with a moderate degree of certainty, that they are still in the district to which they originally belonged, leads one to suppose that the smooth-topped chest is at anyrate commoner in the south.

Our ancestors did not often waste much decoration on the ends of chests or their lids. The front is usually alone incised. Occasionally a band—say of semicircle ornament—is continued from the front top-rail round the ends, but I only know of one besides the remarkable figure-chest of Mr. Seymour Lucas, R.A., described above, which has decorated end panels.

The chest to which I refer is at Newton Manor, Swanage, Dorset. As was to be expected, if the above conclusions are right, its lid is smooth. On the upper rail an S-curved ornament is carved, and the stiles which form the legs of the chest have two single S-curves. There are three panels ornamented with diamonds. The stiles which divide the panels are guilloched, and prettily diversified with squares. The lower rail is straight, with an incised bead. The particular feature of this chest is, of course, the ends, which are panelled and decorated with angular crossed and interlaced incised strap-work. The S-curve also runs round the side along the top rail (Plate xxx.).

Another smooth-topped chest in the same house, and somewhat larger than the last, has remarkably handsome and large leaf patterns on its panels, resembling the Greek 'Anthemion' or honeysuckle pattern. In this chest also the scroll pattern of the upper rail runs round the ends, but the end panels are plain (Plate xxxi.1).

A third smooth-topped chest has plain panels. The upper rail is decorated with a familiar pattern of alternate squares and circles. The stiles have the upright acanthus leaf upon them. The lower edge of the lower rail is shaped with curves and notches. This is not very common on chests, and is a welcome feature when discovered (Plate xxxi.2).

Many chests are to be found in which the principal ornament of the panels is purely geometrical. Sometimes the work is incised, sometimes it is inlaid. Of the former, the chest belonging to Mrs. Rivers Turnbull is an effective example, in which the sharply cut gadrooned upper rail makes with its curves an attractive contrast to the severe triangular shape below. Of geometrical inlay, the chest No. 7270 in the Victoria and Albert Museum offers a specimen (Plate xxxii.1).

From the excellent series of chests belonging to

Mr. Seymour Lucas, R.A., an illustration is given of one with a late linen-fold pattern on the panels.[1] The treatment of the edges of the pattern is such as to disguise the resemblance to a folded napkin, especially along the lower rail. The linen-fold was introduced probably from France about 1480. At first there is no mistaking its origin, as may be seen in the illustration of the panelling from an old house near Taunton (Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 539), where it is decidedly angular in shape. In the pair of panels with arms of the Blount family, which is of the sixteenth century, the folds are more flowing.[2] Later panels are sometimes much elaborated, and there are Jacobean ones to be found with gouged work upon them, but these are isolated examples of its decadence. The real vogue of the linen panel was not for more than seventy or eighty years, though it is to be found in a debased style as late as 1650.

In chests with the planted arch, the pillars generally abut against a perfectly plain stile-edge; and in the cypress chest with incised arches, there is a reproduction or reminiscence in the flat of this way of fitting.[3] Examination of the other illustrations of chests without arches will show a considerable variety of methods of beading or moulding the framing. Sometimes regular mitred mouldings are applied round the panels, as in the case of Mr. Seymour Lucas's inlaid chest with incised frame. The same treatment occurs in the handsome chest, with four inlaid flower panels (No. 69, Victoria and Albert Museum).[4] Early, however, in the seventeenth century, it seems to have been a common practice to vary the sides of panels by having either the upright stiles moulded and the transoms or rails only bevelled with a chamfer, or else to treat them in the opposite way, moulding the rail, and leaving the upright stile-edges

[1] Plate xxxii. 2. [2] Plate xiii. [3] Plate xxxiii. [4] Plate xxxv.

plain. Of the first method, the chest with decorated ends at Newton Manor offers a good example, and of the second the chest with plain panels and notched lower rail (Plate XXXI.2) is a specimen. Mrs. Rivers Turnbull's geometrically carved chest (Plate XXXII.1) is a third variety, in which the stiles are nicely moulded, whilst on the upper rail there is a mere incised line, and on the lower rail a plain chamfer. In some of these cases there is an effect as though the workman had decorated his edges after the panels were framed up, and then had used some tool which was not adapted for going into corners, where his incised lines do not meet as they might be expected to do. Some of the panelling of the Abbey House, Waltham (Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 2011), is beaded in this manner, the transoms having a regular 'stop chamfer' on the edge. There is an artistic advantage obtained by the breaking of the straight lines, which to an observer is very noticeable. Large extents of small panelling of much the same shape and size have a great many rectangularly meeting lines, irrespective of those actually made by the beading. A few obvious breaks save the appearance from becoming entirely mechanical and monotonous. Even on the three panels of the lid of a chest the advantages of the broken line are manifest. There is also a constructive reason why beadings should not completely meet at the angles of a panel. Unless the woodwork was very thick, the incised line if carried over the parts where the mortice and tenon fit would tend to weaken the joint. A glance, however, at the Waltham panels will show how important is the artistic consideration alone (Plates XIV., XXXVII.).

The ordinary type of applied moulding of the early seventeenth century is well seen on the inlaid chest, with the swan in the centre panel, belonging to Mr. Seymour Lucas, R.A.[1] As the century ended and the

[1] Plate XXVIII.

'raised and splayed' panel was used, in which the centre rectangle projects above a bevelled edge—like that of plate-glass—there are, as a rule, less members in the mouldings, which usually consist of an ovolo and a fillet, or else an ogee, but Wren's mouldings at Kensington Palace and Hampton Court are quite as elaborate as those of the previous style.

We may safely assert that, as in the case of the oak chair, very few chests exactly resemble each other. All have their peculiarities of dimension and detail, a fact which adds greatly to the interest of a study of them, but renders classification difficult. We can differentiate the early plain chests without panels, and with fronts made of three slabs of wood, the centre horizontal, the others upright. From these we can proceed to the frankly architectural with pointed arcading. Thence we turn to the Elizabethan and early Jacobean, with round arches planted in. Next come those in which the arch lingers as a reminiscence, and which are probably later seventeenth century. Another type is that with stiff geometrical ornament usurping the place of the flower and acanthus decoration. Then we find the change of the style of panel. The earlier has no bevelled edge where it fits into its framing, which, as we have seen, is moulded as to the stiles, while the transoms are bevelled only or stop-chamfered. The later panel is raised and splayed, and raised carving tends to disappear. Along these main lines we can trace the development of the chest, until from having a drawer at the bottom it turns into a chest of drawers.

In spite of broad divisions there will always be exceptions, and one such I may mention in the case of a chest in the possession of the Rev. F. Meyrick-Jones, which is of comparatively late date, and very precisely dated too. This, of the years $169\frac{4}{6}$, with initials R. P. on the front, is not panelled at all. The planks of which it is made are beaded or grooved at intervals

with horizontal beads a few inches apart, so as to give the chest the appearance of being composed of narrow planking similar to that of common modern wainscot.

An unpanelled chest of elm, and with initials T. G., belongs to Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane of Brympton, Yeovil, and has rather handsome incised carving. Another, belonging to the same owner, seems to have been put together of fragments, so uncompromisingly cut off are the applied mouldings on its front. Both of these chests may be referred to the first half of the seventeenth century (Plate XXXIV.).

Belonging to the old oak period, though not of oak, are certain chests common in England, of cypress, cedar, and chestnut. Some are merely incised with well-designed and flowing line ornament of dragons and other shapes suggestive of Italian importation. Others have the thin incised lines filled in with a composition which produces the effect of dark brown inlay. This system is to be found on obviously Italian 'cassoni' or chests, and is therefore very likely an Italian method. There is a third class of chest with a punched ground upon which flat figures are shown in outline. They are generally in bad condition, the detail upon the figures, which was probably obtained by poker or burnt work, having almost entirely disappeared. The wood of which they are composed is perhaps chestnut, and the figures are clad in trunk hose, which would place the date not later than the reign of James I. Small boxes exist with work similar at first sight in appearance to that on these chests, and in very good condition, especially as to the subject on the inside of the lid. Careful examination of these will sometimes show that the very smooth wood of which they are made has been drawn on with a pen or point, possibly dipped into an acid which burns brown. These boxes have pronounced Italian ornament upon

them to suggest their origin. Large chests, apparently in burnt work, with the arms of England, are to be found, such as one which I have mentioned elsewhere, at Milton Abbey, Dorset. They are no doubt of Italian importation, with heraldry put on 'to order.'

The cypress chest of our illustration (Plate XXXIII.), No. 301 in the Victoria and Albert Museum, was perhaps sent over uncarved, but ready dove-tailed. It has three incised arches with birds and dragons inside of them. On the upper 'rail' and 'stiles'—or what in this unpanelled chest correspond to them—are S-curves, some ending in leafage, others in dragons' heads. The dragon motive seems to have been somewhat popular in Wales, where chests carved with it are not uncommon. Another cypress chest, No. 300 in the Museum, has female busts and floral ornament. At Empingham Church, Rutland, there is a good incised cedar chest with figures of animals, but not with composition inlay.

CHAPTER VI

CABINETS OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

WE have to return for a moment to an earlier period. In the chapter upon panelled rooms and beds there is reproduced a series, from the Victoria and Albert Museum, of panels originally at Waltham Abbey. These show, as is there pointed out at greater length, an obvious admixture of Gothic and Renaissance ornament. The chief characteristic of this panelling (Plates XIV. and XXXVII.) is the series of profile heads in medallions which seem to be portraits. They are carved with considerable apparent truth to life. An unique instance of such panelling employed as the chief ornament of what may be perhaps called a 'court cupboard,' the precursor of those illustrated in this chapter, is in the possession of Sir Charles Lawes-Wittewronge, Bart., Rothampstead, near St. Albans. Its elements are simple. It is flat-fronted, with an upper part consisting of three panels in a row, bearing profile heads in medallions similar in style to those of Waltham Abbey. The lower part has a higher cupboard composed of two folding doors, each containing four portrait profiles. The upper three panels are divided by graceful pilasters of Tudor style, and of the same kind as those which appear on the end of the bedstead with linen-fold panelling (Plate XVII.). Strap hinges with fleur-de-lys shaped ends adorn the doors, and there are fine locks. This is perhaps the sole

example of figure-work upon an English cabinet of the date of Henry VIII. remaining. Indeed it is difficult to find any sort of cabinet of this date. With the end of the sixteenth century we at last arrive at a more prolific period, though it is not till the seventeenth that we have ample material to our hand.

What has been said upon the familiar decorative motives of late sixteenth and early seventeenth century furniture in the chapters upon the Renaissance house, and upon panelled rooms and beds, applies equally to the cabinets and cupboards of the same time. It was to be regretted that owing to the difficulty of moving such cumbrous objects there were not more than three or four specimens of the cabinet or court cupboard in the exhibition of furniture at Bethnal Green in 1896. A fine opportunity was lost of seeing gathered together in one place examples hidden away here and there in our country houses. Had many cabinets been assembled with figure-work similar to that upon the Courtenay bed, Mr. Seymour Lucas's fine chest, or the panelling from Exeter which are reproduced in this volume, there would have been an opportunity of debating which were genuinely English, which were the work of foreigners in England, and which, finally, were merely imported fronts from Flanders, with backs and sides added by our native carpenters. The mention of these three categories is sufficient to suggest the complications of the task. A good number of rather florid cabinets exist, which their owners would like to pronounce indubitably English, but which it is the habit to regard with suspicion.

Before referring in detail to the examples reproduced, it is advisable to mention the two types into which these cabinets may be divided.

Judging from the custom in Gothic 'credences' or 'buffets,' such as the Flemish one in the Victoria and Albert Museum, another in the Musée de Cluny, and

an early sixteenth-century example in the Louvre, all of which have 'splayed' sides, the earliest shape is that in which the upper cupboard is narrower in front than it is at the back, the sides sloping or being 'splayed.' In these cabinets the cornice is as long as the back, and the part of the cornice projecting beyond the sides of the upper cupboard is supported by pillars at the corners.

The second type has an upper cupboard with a straight front. The cornice overhangs it boldly for the whole of the length, and in place of the pillars at the corners there are merely pendants of circular or acorn-shape. Occasionally a short stump finial is placed on the cornice top above the pendants. Of the first of these two classes there is (Plate XXXVIII.) a pretty little example in the Victoria and Albert Museum (No. 540), dated on the centre of the frieze of the cornice, 'A. 1603 D.' The mouldings of the cornice are elegantly toothed and beaded, and the frieze on each side of the date is decorated with S-curves linked together with a straight strap. The front of the cupboard has one large panel with a circular arch, under which appears the full-face bust of a young woman in a ruff. The supporting pillars are carved with a deep spiral flute, and the slanting sides of the cupboard with a scroll and flower ornament. The ornament of the lower part consists of similar S-curves to those on the frieze, disposed on a long panel just below the cupboard, and on two drawers which are divided by an inlaid panel with an upright and branching flower. This lower part is supported on four legs joined by rails from front to back and by a long cross stretcher. The back legs are plain, those in front turned, and the rails also are turned with a succession of members knob-shaped and of the same size, varied with rectangular pieces for the junctions of one rail with another. There is a considerable amount of well-disposed chequer inlay on

this example—the usual modest arrangement of dark squares and light. As the whole tone of the piece is somewhat dark, the effect is better than usual. There is good iron-work on lock-plates and handles, the latter being drop loops with the open ends pinched well together. A chair and a swing looking-glass of the same style and *en suite* with this little cabinet are also in the Museum. The bust on the central panel is probably that of the owner of the cabinet, which may have been made for her wedding. It is very well executed, especially as regards the dress and ruff, and compares not unfavourably in this respect with the medallion portraits upon the panelling illustrated from Waltham Abbey.

Quite as early, if not earlier, but intermediate between our two classes, is the next example communicated by Messrs. Gill and Reigate, a remarkably good specimen of inlaid work (Plate XXXIX.). This has the straight-fronted upper cupboard (with three panels well inlaid with leafage and flowers) in which the advantages of extra space counterbalance the greater monotony of shape and light and shade consequent upon the abandonment of the slanting sides. It is supported, however, by complete pillars with Ionic capitals similar to, but not nearly so pronounced as, those upon the bed, No. 316 in the Victoria and Albert Museum. There is a lower cupboard upon which appear two rather squat-shaped arches enclosing geometrical inlaid shapes, similar to those upon the chests illustrated in Plates XXVIII.2 and XXXII.1. Besides the arch, several of the usual decorative motives are well exemplified, such as elegantly elongated S-curves on the frieze, gadroons, and acanthus leafage on the pillars, the guilloche on the upper cupboard stiles, and a variety of the short flute or 'scoop' on the lowest tier of panels.

Of the second type of straight-fronted cabinet, in which pillars give way to pendants, are reproduced two

excellent specimens from Yorkshire. These have been for many years in the same house, and though now separated, are still owned by members of the same family. They have both the almost transparent surface of a dark reddish brown which can only be produced by assiduous polishings with beeswax and turpentine under the inspection of generations of perhaps too conscientious housewives. It is possible to overdo a cabinet with attentions of this kind, but the resulting 'patina' is not of easy imitation by the manufacturers of sham antiques. Time and energy alone will produce such a result. The first of these and the largest (Plate XL.) is at present in the possession of Mrs. C. Newton Robinson. It is abnormally long and low and has knob pendants nicely turned. The cornice is light and simple, with a waved pattern of leaf and flower. There are two cupboards on each side of a centre panel, which has large S-curves upon it and carved leaves and grapes. The cupboard doors are carved with large rosettes, and on the panels outside of these (at each end of the row) is the familiar upright flower with branches. The shelf in front of the cupboards is very narrow, and on the framing below is a pattern of a waved line filled up with fan shapes. The lower part has four main panels, of which the two outside ones are plain. The two middle panels form the lower cupboard doors, and are subdivided into two panels of which the upper and smaller ones have again the upright flower with branches. There are good hinges of the familiar type. It is a pity that besides the initials $_{M}{}^{K}{}_{S}$ there does not appear a date, but it will not be amiss to assign that of 1620 or 1630.

The second of these cabinets (Plate XLI.), belonging to Miss Stirke, is smaller, and not so long for its height. On the cornice at the top there is a pattern of small semicircles, and below it a waved pattern with tulip-shaped flowers and rosettes. There is the same arrange-

ment of upper panels as in the larger cabinet, but the outside ones are narrower. The hinges are of the opposed C shape. The shelf is narrow, and below it again appears the semicircle pattern. The panels of the lower cupboards have large semicircles, and the incised work of these is not entirely happy, being somewhat too thin for the size of the semicircles. It seems that the design of some of the panels is not quite suited to the narrowness of their shape, so that types which we are accustomed to see spread over an ample field are here rather squeezed. The same approximate date may be assigned to this as to the last. Both are first-rate examples of genuine provincial furniture made for a well-to-do yeoman class, and as typically English as they can be. The simple style of ornamentation must commend itself to those who consider that decoration should be subservient to construction. The fan or semicircle pattern holds a large place in the last, and is prominent on the frieze of the next (Plate XLII.), which comes from Cheshire and is the property of Mr. E. Hockliffe. This is a pronounced instance of the habit of confining most of the ornament to the upper part, to which I refer subsequently in the chapter on solid-backed chairs. It is observable on the two Yorkshire cabinets, but is more marked in this one, the lower panels of which are perfectly plain. It is interesting to notice the difference of the hinges, those of the Cheshire example being perhaps a more elegant local variety than the Yorkshire type. The strap hinges on the upper cupboard of the Yorkshire cabinets are a special feature.

In Wales it is customary to find these cabinets with an upper story open in front, so as to serve for the display of pewter or pottery. In the example illustrated (Plate XLIII.1), which is a plain one of late date, the property of the writer, the sides of the upper story, behind the turned pillars, are composed of flat laths.

The hinges are not original. Carved instances are to be found. Not an uncommon detail in Wales is an S-curve, fashioned into a dragon shape, with barbed tongue.

Etymologists are not very satisfactory in their explanations of the name of 'court cupboard,' which is given to these pieces of furniture. In Singer's notes to *Romeo and Juliet*, where the term is used, it is explained as meaning a cumbrous piece of furniture, with stage or shelves gradually receding like stairs to the top, whereon the plate was displayed at festivals. Chapman in his *May Day*, 1611, speaks of court cupboards planted with flagons, cans, cups, beakers, etc. The court cupboard, Singer adds, was also called 'cupboard of plate' and 'livery cupboard,' but the latter term came in time, as we shall see presently, to be applied to a special shape of cupboard quite distinct from the first.

It is well to remind ourselves of the literal meaning of the word cupboard, *i.e.* not a receptacle with doors, but an object for the display of cups and plates.[1] Singer's piece of furniture, with 'shelves reaching like stairs,' recalls the Gothic buffet or 'credence,' English examples of which, perhaps, do not exist. There are, however, French and Flemish examples of the fifteenth century, of which Mr. F. Litchfield in his *History of Furniture* reproduces a specimen from Viollet le Duc's *Mobilier*. This has no enclosed part, and is very tall. Probably it was found that a lower piece of furniture with a part enclosed was a more convenient form, and this reduction of height would account for the term 'court-cupboard,' *i.e.* short cupboard. The Flemish credence in the Victoria and Albert Museum, to which reference has already been made, has the slanting sides, and is about the height, of the example of 1603, illustrated on Plate XXXVIII. Upon each of these there

[1] The farmer had 'pewter *on* his cupboard.' See Harrison, *Description of England*, 'on the Manner of Building and Furniture of our Houses.' 1577.

is opportunity for the display of a greater or less quantity of plate.

It seems to me a more natural genesis of the court cupboard to derive it from the Gothic buffet with shelves, than to call it, as Mr. Fred Roe does in *Ancient Coffers and Cupboards*, 'a modification of the armoire.' In the next sentence he remarks that the one differs essentially from the other. The armoire is a flat-fronted object enclosed with doors reaching down to the floor. The York Minster example (Plate II.) is the type. Seventeenth century oak flat-fronted cupboards, which are to all intents and purposes 'armoires,' exist in sufficient numbers. One has recently been presented to the Victoria and Albert Museum. These appear to me to be the Gothic armoire's legitimate successors, which the court cupboard, with its recessed upper part forming a shelf, and pillars or pendants, could never have been. The only resemblance between the armoire and the court cupboard lies in the fact that while the armoire is completely covered in, the court cupboard may be. But its really essential element, the shelf for the display of plate or beakers, which makes it a cupboard, is perfectly alien to the armoire. Lastly, the overhanging top with pendants seems an obvious reminiscence of the overhanging canopied top with pendants, as it appears upon Viollet-Le Duc's buffet, or upon canopied chairs, such as the one also reproduced by Mr. Litchfield, *History of Furniture* (p. 38), from a Burgundy Library MS. at Brussels.

Referring to these 'oak presses,' as he calls them, Mr. Litchfield mentions (p. 121) that they are described in inventories of 1680 to 1720 as 'press cupboards,' 'great cupboards,' wainscot,' and 'joyned cupboards.' To this list may be added that of 'butter cupboard,' where, as is the case with an example belonging to Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane of Brympton, Somerset, the

back and sides have been bored with holes in regular patterns to admit the air and keep butter fresh.

This speciality of use for food-stuffs brings us to the other moot point of 'livery cupboards.' We have seen that Singer says that the term was used indiscriminately with 'court cupboard' and 'cupboard of plate'; and he describes the object so named as a piece of furniture with stages or shelves. Mr. Litchfield (p. 73) quotes from records in the British Museum of contracts made for joiners' work at Hengrave about 1518, in which 'livery' cupboards are specified. 'Ye cobards they be made ye facyon of livery y is wthout doors.' He says that 'they consisted of three stages or shelves standing on four turned legs, with a drawer for table linen.' This answers to the familiar shape of our present kitchen dresser, whose more ornamental exemplar abounds in Wales. A fine eighteenth-century example in the possession of the writer is illustrated here. The specimen without shelves is the property of the Rev. F. Meyrick-Jones.[1] Mr. Litchfield makes a quotation from Harrison's *Description of England* at the end of the sixteenth century, to the effect that after a person has been supplied with drink (at the lower retainers' tables in a rich man's hall) 'he delivereth the cup again to some one of the standers by, who . . . restoreth it to the cupboard from whence he fetched the same.'[2] His conclusion is that livery or 'service' cupboards were dressers upon which mugs were hung by hooks, as they are now. Very few, at any rate, of this early period can remain.

The more acceptable application of the word livery (*livrée*) belongs to a cupboard enclosed, not by panelled, but by railed doors, allowing free ingress to the air. From supper to breakfast, 7 P.M. to 10 A.M., was a very

[1] Plate XLIII. 1 and 2.

[2] The paragraph, slightly obscure, seems to refer to halls of middle degree. The custom 'cut off much idle tippling.'

long time, and as people were liable to be hungry in between, food and drink were kept in cupboards of this description and 'delivered' in portions for those who required them, to take to their bedrooms. This is how Mr. J. H. Pollen understands the matter in his introduction to the catalogue of the Bethnal Green Exhibition. Mr. Baring-Gould in *An Old English Home* illustrates a specimen and gives a very apt quotation from Spenser's account of the state of Ireland: 'What livery is, we by common use in England know well enough, namely, that it is an allowance of horse-meat, as they commonly use the word stabling, as to keep horses at "livery"; the which word, I guess, is derived of livering or delivering forth their nightly food; so in great houses the livery is said to be served up for all night —that is their evening allowance for drink.'

Mr. W. Bliss Sanders in his *Half-timbered Houses and Carved Oak-Work*, refers to this question whether court and livery cupboards were the same thing, which he says antiquaries have long debated. His view appears to be that originally they were not the same, but that their uses later were combined. Mr. Litchfield reproduces in his *History of Furniture* (p. 116) one of the two so-called livery cupboards belonging to the Stationers' Company. It is an open dresser, with shelves and a covered receptacle below. 'They formerly stood on the dais,' he says, 'and are good examples of the cupboards for display of plate of this period (seventeenth century). The lower part (enclosed) was formerly the receptacle for unused viands, which were distributed to the poor after the feast.' If that is the case, we have here examples of the combined uses of a buffet or dresser and a livery cupboard. Unfortunately the date of the object illustrated appears to be no earlier than 1674, and it has also been fitted with an ornate broken pediment, with heavy voluted ends, and an eagle on a pedestal between them, the whole

apparently added in the year 1788. The date of 1674 is altogether too late for this much-altered specimen to assist us to a conclusion.

After all, it does not greatly matter whether the term livery cupboard was or was not at one time applied both to an object with open shelves like a dresser and to a cupboard with a front composed of pilasters. The present facts are that we have oak dressers remaining with open shelves, and also what are undoubtedly livery cupboards with pilaster fronts, used either in bedrooms to hold food for the night, or in churches for weekly doles. That which is illustrated (Plate XLIV.) is one of several at St. Albans. It is in the south transept, and was instituted by one Robert Skelton, in 1628. Its actual date may be somewhat earlier. Mr. W. Bliss Sanders draws a distinction between bedroom livery cupboards and those used in sitting-rooms. The Stationers' specimens may afford an idea of the latter, but the writer knows of no other existing examples. For him the livery cupboard, as it remains to us, is the pilaster-fronted receptacle for food, either used in a bedroom or a church, though the quotation from the Hengrave contract may be taken as an evidence that the original livery cupboard was an object with open shelves. Mr. Sanders has many quotations which contain neither the word 'livery' nor 'court cupboard.' One of few which are to the point is from the will of Mary Chapman of Bury, 1649:—'I give unto my daughter Mary Chapman my posted setteworke bedstead and liv'ry cupbord to it,' which is pretty conclusive evidence of what a livery cupboard meant in the first half of the seventeenth century.

There is a noticeable contrast between the foregoing examples in this chapter and those which follow. These last depend much more for their effect upon either applied mouldings, or applied turned half-

pendants, or large and small oval bosses or prisms. The last two figure largely upon the cabinet upon a stand (No. 67) in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Plate XLV.2), and also upon that belonging to Sir Charles Robinson of Newton Manor, Dorset (Plate XLV.1). This also, in all probability, had a stand similar to the other. It is the custom to ascribe to Flemish influences examples in which a too liberal use of this applied work has been made. Certainly there are two particular motives which may be legitimately set down to that influence. The first is where turned half-pendants are used broader at the top, tapering towards the bottom, and with a horizontal strap across them carved in the wood as if to represent a fastening by which they are made to adhere to the main body. The effect, enhanced by circular bosses representing broad nail-heads at each end of the strap, is somewhat like that of a bradawl which a carpenter thrusts into a leather loop to keep it in its place on the wall of his workshop. The second practice is that of covering panels with applied fretwork from an eighth to a quarter of an inch in thickness, much besprinkled with 'nail-head' bosses. These are certainly two Flemish tendencies. As to the applied mouldings set at many different angles, shown by some of the chests of drawers illustrated, and diamond and prism shapes, Flanders was not their only home: they are widespread over Renaissance furniture generally.

A more precise discussion than any turning upon this or that foreign influence can be mooted as to the relative merits of applied work and solid carving. Those with whom it remains a cardinal principle that ornament shall proceed naturally out of, or be kept subservient to, the constructive nature of the object, will prefer the merely carved cupboard to that depending for ornament upon pendants or pilasters, which are more detachable with age than is to be desired. If,

however, we insist upon being too logical, we are liable to turn our principle into a fetish whose behests, if we obeyed them, would entail our discarding the familiar planted arch from our oaken furniture, and reducing it to a state of solid but rather primitive simplicity. The uncompromising purist can triumph in theory when, for instance, he points out that the mouldings on the framework of a panel were meant merely to diversify the step or slant or bevel from the plane of the framing to that of the panel. Therefore they should be worked upon the solid wood, and not be mere beadings bought at so much a foot ready made, to be glued or tacked on to the structure. In practice, however, the applied moulding, in various shapes and ornaments, crept in very early, as many of our illustrations will show. It is better, therefore, to accept this style of ornamentation, if it is well calculated and not too Flemishly florid and heavy. The ovals in Sir Charles Robinson's cabinet (Plate XLV. I), which has four 'nail-head' bosses on each door panel, are certainly open to this imputation, and in so far make it inferior to its companion. Both may be called 'Cromwellian' in period, a time at which we shall see that the leather-covered chair, much studded with nails, was introduced from over the water, and vied in comparative plainness with these unassuming cabinets.

Very similar in general style, and of the same period, perhaps later, is the coin cabinet (Plate XLVI.) belonging to Mrs. Edmund McClure. This is a much more elaborately finished specimen. It is of oak and cedar inlaid with rosewood. Within there are ten drawers on one side and thirteen on the other.

The last but one (Plate XLVII.) of our examples, communicated by Messrs. Gill and Reigate, introduces a type which is not very uncommon, and for which some are inclined to claim a foreign origin. It is roughly inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl, the

carcase being of oak panelled with other woods. Upon comparison with the preceding specimens and with Mr. Crowther-Beynon's bracketed chest of drawers (Plate LXII.), it will be seen that there is very little in it either of moulding or ornament to preclude its being English. I have seen a specimen from the outlying coast village of Worth, in Dorset, which was inlaid in exactly the same manner, and had pairs of plain pilasters split and applied upon the stiles in a shape and arrangement which was entirely English. Worth is but three or four miles from Corfe Castle, where, as I have mentioned elsewhere, there was inventoried in 1643-4 a trunk covered with mother-of-pearl. It is possible that this piece of furniture also was part of that which disappeared when Corfe fell into the hands of the Parliamentarians.

From Mr. J. W. Hurrell's useful book of measured drawings, chiefly of Lancashire furniture, we may conclude that oak court cupboards and cabinets fitted with applied pilasters and half-pendants were popular in that and neighbouring counties. One combines freehand carving with applied work. Many rely for their ornamentation upon geometrical arrangements of mouldings, as on the chest of drawers No. 70 in the Victoria and Albert Museum. One in particular is a court cupboard much adorned with prism shapes, oval bosses, and nail-heads or buttons applied. Some cabinets, or chests of drawers, rather, are found upon raised stands or with cushioned friezes, bulging outwards, such as prove them to belong to the very end of the seventeenth century, and one has a bulging bracket foot (as on the Welsh dresser reproduced in Plate XLIII.2) which, if original, would place it later still. Plate XXIX. in Mr. Hurrell's book shows a chest in Little Moreton Hall, Cheshire, fitted with the tapering half-pendant fastened by the 'strap,' exactly in the manner which, I have suggested above, is of Flemish

origin. Though it has not the quasi-fastening nail-head or button, the end of the 'strap' is rounded by way of compromise. A cabinet of the general type of those described, and belonging to the Rev. F. Meyrick-Jones, is reproduced on Plate XLVIII.

It is convenient in this place to mention the 'sideboard' of the old oak period. The eighteenth, nineteenth, and present century embodiments must not obtrude themselves on our minds. The sideboard of the end of the sixteenth century and a little later is a two- or three-tiered table more resembling what we sometimes describe as a 'dinner-wagon.' Its tiers are supported by more or less bulbous pillars similar to those on beds, tables, and court cupboards. In fact, if the two spaces between the tiers were filled in with a back and cupboard doors, there would not be much difference between a sideboard and a court cupboard. The supports of these pieces of furniture are most exaggerated and bulbous, according as they approximate in date to the beds and tables and cabinets which have the bulbous shapes, *i.e.* those which date from about 1580 to 1590. The more moderate supports of the cabinet in Plate XXXIX. would point to a rather later date. It is customary, and no doubt correct in the main, to consider furniture carved in bold relief with marked gadroon shapes as earlier than that which, as in Plate XL., shows lightly incised work by comparison. But these distinctions of dating must not be relied upon too much. Two instances are sufficient to show the precarious nature of the attempt. The tables on Plates XLIX.1 and LII.2 are, especially the latter, carved in a bold manner which might tempt us to place them in the sixteenth century. They date, in fact, from 1616 and 1622 respectively.

CHAPTER VII

TABLES OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

ONCE past the period of the Trestle (a word which is of doubtful derivation, not from 'three-stule,' as some like to fancy, but probably of French and Latin outcome), we find at least half a dozen different types of table to fill up the space from the end of the sixteenth to the end of the seventeenth century. Perhaps not very many sixteenth-century tables remain, but we may presume that those which we have of the early seventeenth century very much resembled their immediate forerunners. Amongst other places, the college halls of Oxford and Cambridge retain the principle of the dais or raised platform at the end of the room, on which was placed the chief table, or 'high table,' as we still call it. It is a prosaic enough object now, but we may be very sure that at such a place as Wolsey's palace of Hampton Court, the best tables were worthy of the innumerable tapestries and the two hundred and eighty beds mostly hung with silk. One of these tables we can guess at from a contemporary drawing of the seizure of the Cardinal's goods by Henry VIII., reproduced in Mr. E. Law's *History of Hampton Court Palace*. Though it is covered by the usual 'carpet' or tablecloth, the end legs are half seen. They are of cabriole shape, heavily carved with acanthus leaves, and ending in broad scrolled feet resting on a massive plinth. Between the feet, and resting on the plinth, is a satyr's head in full relief. The ancient custom,

according to which the head of the house dined with all his household in the hall, was only then beginning to be neglected, and we may conclude that there was plentiful demand for the largest and finest tables in the days of Wolsey's and Henry VIII.'s ownership of Hampton Court Palace. In Elizabeth's reign, in the year 1592, the Duke of Wurtemberg paid a visit, and mentions in his diary a table-cover valued at 50,000 crowns, and also notices that there were many writing-tables inlaid with mother-of-pearl. These may have been foreign in design, but it is also equally possible that they were English in execution, as the entirely English names of the authors of the most minute carving in the palace, still preserved in the accounts, would render likely.

A table of walnut wood, inlaid, exists at Hardwick Hall, which affords some idea of later sixteenth century magnificence. It is approximately ten feet long by four and a quarter feet wide. The top consists of three boards inlaid with decoration in three parallel, longitudinal bands. One is of musical instruments and scrolls of music. The centre band contains very intricate cartouche ornament with cherubs, stags, and the arms of Cavendish, Talbot, and Hardwick. 'Bess of Hardwick' took, as her fourth husband, the Earl of Shrewsbury in 1568. The arms commemorate her own wedding, and the marriage of her son and daughter, Henry and Mary Cavendish, to a son and daughter of the Earl of Shrewsbury. A shield on the left bears the arms of Talbot impaling Hardwick, and that on the right those of Cavendish impaling Talbot. In the centre there is a cartouche, and a mysterious couplet to this effect—

'The Redolent Smle
Of Aeglentyne
We Stagges Exault
To the Deveyne.'

The third band of ornament contains more musical instruments, backgammon or tric-trac boards and playing-cards. The curious spelling of the word 'Smell' is just such a mistake as an Italian workman might make in an inscription in a foreign tongue. Many English churchyards, however, can show examples of the monumental mason's carelessness with his own language, so that it is not impossible that this table was the work of English workmen, who had either been to Italy or been taught by Italian inlayers.

The legs of this table are not elegant, being of an elongated peg-top shape, with a small gadrooned member, and little flattened Ionic capitals above. The peg-top shafts are inlaid with lines of coloured wood. The inside of the stretchers is also covered with ornament. This table is perhaps the most elaborate and grandiose inlaid table existing which may fairly be said to be of English workmanship. It is not in the best of condition.

There is another much smaller table at Hardwick with fluted, square, columnar legs, and an inlaid top decorated with the same playing-card inlay as that which occurs on the larger specimen. The five of each suit appears as the corner ornament of a strap-work inlaid border enclosing a square resembling a chess-board, except that in lieu of dark and light squares there are dark circles with light interspacings. This, like the other, is a totally exceptional object.

Of the subjects illustrated the origin need scarcely be disputed, whatever the decoration of the more elaborate ones may be. The earliest of these types and the most ornamental is best represented (Plate XLIX. 1) by the oak table from the Charterhouse (formerly a communion table), even though it dates as late as 1616. It shows the system of a central bearer and end supports which is usual with most of these distinctly architectural tables. In our illustration it will be seen

that the frame is heavily cushioned and carved with cherubs' heads and garlands. There are the arms of Thomas Sutton, founder of the Charterhouse Hospital, and the date of 1616. The upper part is supported on thirteen columns with semi-Corinthian capitals and ornamented lower shafts. The H-shaped base is a characteristic of various tables of this kind, the more elaborate of which it is impossible, without a plan, to describe. Mr. J. W. Hurrell has included in his *Measured Drawings of Old Oak English Furniture* one or two of the sort. A very good one at Chetham's College, Manchester, has the H-shaped base, but its end and centre legs are not classical columns. They partake more of an octagonal and Tudoresque description. Under the table top, and following its length, are round arches, with pendants only between, and unsupported by pillars, as, for instance, may be roughly seen in the octagonal table belonging to Miss Evans of Forde Abbey (Plate L. 1). But the Chetham's College table is a very long one; fully twelve feet, with eight of these pendant-divided arches under its top. At each of the four corners of the table are very heavy octagonal pendants. The frame under the table top has a rough species of gadrooning.

In the same set of drawings from Chetham's College, which are well worthy of examination, is a variant on the H-based shape. The H-shape is there, with four baluster-legs or supports on its central bar instead of the five columns of the Charterhouse table. Now we must imagine, looking at the Charterhouse table, that from each projecting cross end of the H a morticed stretcher slants towards, and is morticed in under the first pillar at each end of, the central bar. This fills up the angles of the H, and affords an additional platform in the Chetham's College table, upon which a heavy double curved leg is set. There are, naturally, four of these, and their heavy convex curves above, and con-

cave ones below, suggest precursors of the cabriole leg. In the vestry of St. Mary's Church, Wareham, are the remains of a table which has four heavy legs similarly curved. They are roughly carved on their upper parts with lions' heads.

Elsewhere the origin of the cabriole leg is considered. It is a natural shape conventionalised. In a reproduction from a Harleian MS., Knight's *Old England*, vol. i. p. 69, there is a Saxon table with almond-shaped top (like the form known as *vesica piscis*) which has similar legs, cabriole in their curves, with variously carved heads, one a lion's or leopard's, above, and lion's paw feet. If we are to be guided by this we may conclude that there is nothing new under the sun in furniture design.

A good H-based table which has three pillars placed as the five of the Charterhouse table, and round arches above them, may be seen at Astbury Church, near Congleton. At the ends, instead of the four of the Charterhouse, there are but three pillars, of which the centre one is slight, like those of the long central bar. This, however, is a much less ornamental table than that of the Charterhouse, most of its decoration being confined to the cushioned frame under the top, which is carved with the usual gadroon and acanthus leaf at the corners.

From St. Michael's Church, St. Albans, is reproduced (Plate XLIX.2) a table in which, though the architectural pillar remains, the H-base has disappeared. The legs and frame are profusely covered with strap-work of an S-curve nature. This table has suffered severely with time. There was no doubt a proper pendant in the centre of the frame, which has obviously been shortened at one end. It is even possible that the table originally had an H-base and more columns, the present legs below the columns forming a very unsatisfactory foundation.

The arch remains in certain less assuming octagonal tables, of which an admirable example is to be seen in the Hall of the Carpenters' Company. This is about three and a quarter feet only in diameter, with a round arch, toothed, between each of its legs, to give a finish and variety to the frame. The legs carved with gadroon shapes are stout, but not so proportionately heavy as those upon our later tables. Great interest and importance attaches to this table, because it bears in the spandrels of the arches the initials of the Master and Wardens of the Company for the year 1606. The date is carved in two of the spandrels, and the others bear the initials R. W., G. I., J. R., and W. W.,—Richard Wyatt, George Isack, John Reeve, and William Wilson being the names of the officials of that year. The octagonal top is answered below by stretchers between each leg and two large cross-pieces. The stretchers have each a pair of segments of a circle cut out from below, to recall the arches of the upper part of the table. Altogether it is an excellent example of good design and workmanship.

The arched table illustrated on Plate L.I has certain special peculiarities. It is of oak, with a hexagonally shaped frame, and an octagonal top which folds over about a middle line. The two legs at the back swing on the cross stretcher in the manner of 'gate-tables,' to which reference is made presently. The plain shape of the turned legs would suggest that this example, which belongs to Miss Evans of Forde Abbey, is later than that at Carpenters' Hall, and may date about 1620.

A very fine example (No. 384 in the Victoria and Albert Museum) introduces us to the solid carving-table such as our ancestors used, to place upon them those rounds of beef which by a harmless poetical convention are supposed to have been larger than they are to-day, and to have caused 'the board' to groan. Perhaps the

preceding trestle arrangement was more liable to this peculiarity. At any rate this table (Plate LI.) is undoubtedly of the kind which ministered to that ancient hospitality of which Evelyn makes mention as keeping open house in his brother's mansion of Wotton. The earlier trestled table was probably even narrower than this one, not more than two feet and a half wide. Some suppose that the guests who sat at the earlier 'board,' on one side of it only, with their backs to the wall, did so originally in order to be the better prepared for any sudden attack. The remembrance of those primitive days is very likely recalled by the comparative narrowness of the heavy seventeenth-century table. The times had changed when these were made, and they are not too large for a smaller room than the great hall of a country house. Parlours came gradually into use at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and in these the master lived and dined instead of taking his meals in the great hall with his servants. Some say that this was due to the general disuse of feudal customs and also to religious dissensions. These led to the master's want of trust in those about him, and his consequent preference for some small room where he could speak his mind unheard save by those in his confidence. It is, I think, quite as reasonable to suppose that a desire for comfort was as strong a motive. Big rooms are cold and draughty, small ones can be more easily warmed and furnished. Therefore not too great stress should be laid upon political or religious motives, even though a bishop, fearful of a weakening in church influence, did in 1526 inveigh against dining 'in corners and secret places.'

This particular example was known as a 'drawing' table, that is, one which could be extended by means of its double slabs on the top. 'Two ends are made to be drawn out by main force, which then become supported by sliders, while the centre previously held by these in

a higher position falls to its place from its own weight.' This is the description in Shaw's *Specimens of Ancient Furniture*, where a very similar one to this is illustrated from Leeds Castle, in Kent. The short piece between the lower slabs of the Museum example is stationary; the ends when drawn out are caused by the sliders to come up to the level of the upper slab. At Birts Morton, Worcestershire, there is a 'drawing' table resembling the Museum specimen, though not inlaid. The short piece between the lower slabs is part and parcel of the upper piece. When the end sliders were extended, and the lower slabs drawn out upon them, these would rise to the level of the top slab. In tables with no fixed central piece the top slab sinks to the level of the lower ones. The whole of the frame is inlaid chiefly with chequers, triangles, and rhomboidal border shapes of dark and light wood. The smallness of the design seems hardly quite in keeping with the massive proportions of the legs and slabs. The legs, it will be seen, have somewhat flattened capitals similar to those on the bed of 1593, in which they are so pronounced a feature. Mr. G. T. Robinson, in the course of articles upon furniture published in the *Art Journal* of 1881, illustrated a 'drawing table' with the very plain 'acorn' legs, perhaps of 1660 *circa*, devoid of gadrooning or acanthus carving. It had its top inlaid with broad, geometrically placed straight lines of pearwood stained to imitate ebony. These and other tables were very generally covered with a 'carpet'—such as may be seen in innumerable pictures of the little Dutch masters, a tablecloth formed of a rug of Persian or Turkish pattern—'Turkey work'—as it was generically described. It is quite the exception to find in these interiors a table unconcealed by its covering. The various names of 'standing,' 'joined,' and 'dormant' tables were applied to these successors of the board and trestle. Those with one top slab, and either

four or six legs, according to their length, are not uncommon. The four-legged variety is to be found in many a parish church, where it has served as the communion table, which took the place of the 'altar.' The example illustrated in Plate LII.1 is from Montacute Church, and belongs to Mr. W. R. Phelips, of Montacute. It is unfortunately much ruined, having lost a considerable part of its length, as the position of the date letters will show. Something, too, is missing from the top of the legs—perhaps capitals like those on the Victoria and Albert Museum specimen. The moulding of the top slab also seems to belong rather to the end of the seventeenth century or the beginning of the eighteenth, and we should expect a greater thickness in the wood. Yet withal it is a very interesting specimen, nicely carved, and with particularly good work on the frame. It may be noticed that the prisms and elliptical shapes enclosed by the usual strap-work of alternate 'round and square' are carved each with pretty details. There is in Gillingham Church, Dorset, a monument which may be compared with this table of 1622 in this respect. Pretentious, with obelisks or truncated steeples at each end and at the top, it was erected in memory of various members of the Jesop family, the last of whom died in 1625, three years after the Montacute table was made. Under the cornice, which has a dental course, there is a frieze with just such alternating highly relieved oblongs and rounds or prisms and bosses as appear upon this table. Examples in which these appear as a feature may be reasonably placed in this decade of 1620-1630. It is much more usual to find the flat strap-work without the highly relieved shapes. Tables lacking these may probably be regarded as later, especially as they very generally have more slender turned legs than those of the beds of Elizabeth and the tables of James I. The stretchers of seventeenth-century tables are usually four-sided in section, and occasionally beaded. Tables of

the earliest sixteenth century have a T-shaped section to their stretchers, which is not characteristic of the later types.

The box upon the Montacute table is what is often called a 'Bible-box'—though, like the 'coffin stool,' it was probably often enough used for other purposes. It belongs to Sir Thomas Wardle of Leek, Staffordshire, and has its flower-work diapered so as almost to represent embroidery, an effect which is helped out by the very neat punching of the ground. A clumsily added lock and hasp interferes with the design of a particularly good example.

To return to our tables, it is worth while to remind the reader that altar-cloths in churches even now very commonly conceal good specimens of altar-tables. One of the best I have seen is in the church of Tickencote, Rutland, famous for a great Norman arch. It stands on a slab of Purbeck marble, which was probably the slab of the altar which it displaced. It has wide turned legs, and the following inscription in Roman capitals on the east and west sides: 'O precor aeternae tecum discumbere mensae Des illi hanc mensam quae tibi Christe dedit.' On the south end: 'Ex dõn dom̃ Annae Beverly, 1627,' which the writer of an excellent little account of the church translates: 'O Christ, I pray thee grant to her, who gave this table to Thee, to sit down at Thine eternal table. The gift of the Lady Ann Beverly, 1627.'

In St. Andrew's Church, Sunning, is a specimen with gadrooned and acanthus-carved legs. A good authentic example of a nineteen feet long standing table may be found at Brown's Hospital, Stamford.[1] One of a smaller usual type, illustrated here, belongs to Mr. E. Hockliffe, the Hall, Uppingham. It has turned legs of somewhat 'cheese-moulding' shape (Plate LII.2).

[1] This table has rather thin baluster-shaped legs, and belongs to the period of Charles I.

Akin to long tables are those rather rare objects entitled shovel-boards, without which formerly the great hall of a country house was not complete. They were sometimes as much as forty feet long, and were used to play a game resembling the modern 'squails,' heavier weights being employed. The task set was to shove the weight from one end of the table to the other, approaching as close as possible to the further edge, yet not causing the weight to fall into the trough or drawer placed to receive those overpushed. These tables were sometimes very expensively made. One at Chartley consisted of 260 pieces of wood accurately joined. It was over thirty feet long. At Birts Morton Hall, Worcestershire, is a moderate-sized one; and another, formerly the property of the Paston family, from Oxnead Hall, Norfolk, is now in the Norwich Museum. At Littlecote, Wiltshire, there is another example. Not much decoration was lavished upon these precursors of the bagatelle-board and billiard-table.

Of a much lighter type are the 'gate tables,' or, as an American writer likes to call them, 'Hundred-legged' tables (Plate L.2). The usual number of legs is eight upon tables of ordinary and moderate size, but there are very large examples, as at Penshurst, with as many as twenty legs, which may give some colour to playful exaggeration. The ordinary type is a table with oval folding top. The leaves when lifted are supported by legs joined with cross stretchers and swinging like a gate, as we have already seen is the case with the octagonal table belonging to Miss Evans. The example illustrated (No. 71 in the Victoria and Albert Museum) is perhaps a rather late one made in Derbyshire at the end of the seventeenth century. It has a small amount of incised carving, which is not common upon gate tables. Nor are the arches under the drawers a usual feature. Sometimes the main part of the legs is octagonal, as in one belonging to the writer, and spiral

legs are also found, the turning increasing in size on some examples as it approaches the lower end. Those with baluster-shaped legs, as in the illustration, are perhaps the commonest, and the spiral-turned the most rare. There is not much doubt that this useful form of table has continued to be made until quite recent years in the old style, the tradition being faithfully followed in out of the way country places. One has been met with by a dealer in the Midlands which appeared to be a perfect specimen of the seventeenth century. It turned out to have been made from an old pattern by the husband of the woman in whose cottage it was found. Tables in other woods than oak, with the 'gates' on either side, the writer has not met with, but at Hampton Court, in the great hall, there is a table, apparently of laburnum veneer, which has two sets of gates on one side, and is bordered with the 'herring-bone' inlay, to which attention is particularly drawn in the chapter on smooth-surfaced furniture. The stretchers in this case are turned. There is also an oak table with but one gate, which resembles our illustration in so far as it is carved with a reminiscence of the 'Spanish foot' found upon the chairs of 1690 approximately.

Holding a middle place between chair and table, is a piece of furniture made to serve the purpose of both. These objects seem to have been in comparatively early use. There is an inventory of the Archbishop of Canterbury's goods at Lambeth in 1575, in which a 'Table Chaire' is mentioned, whilst at 'Croiden House' the same ecclesiastic possessed a 'Waynscote Table, chaire-wise.' That of our illustration (Plate LIII. 1) is the property of Sir Charles Robinson, Newton Manor, Swanage, Dorset. It is an unassuming object, without decoration. There is a flap seat to serve as a box. When the hinged back is lowered to serve as a table-top, a stick or peg was thrust through the holes

at the ends of the shaped flanges, and also through corresponding holes at the ends of the arms, to prevent the top from tipping upwards if too much weight were placed on one end. Mr. Litchfield reproduces in his *History of Furniture* a chair-table which is said to have belonged to Theodore Hook, and is more elaborate. The table-top or chair-back was circular, and made of several planks, strengthened by two rather elaborately shaped cross-pieces which worked on pins through the hinder ends of the arms, as in the example illustrated. When Hook's possession served as a chair, there was to be seen a handsome, irregular, diamond-shaped piece of incised carving. The lower part has the shaped arms, turned supports, and legs of a regular solid-backed oak chair, and the seat frame was carved.

Mr. W. Bliss Sanders, in *Half-timbered Houses and Carved Oak-Work*, has a drawing of a settle and table combined. This worked upon the same principle, and had a semicircle pattern incised on the frame of the seat. Neither of these two objects described is known to the writer. Chair-tables even of the plain type illustrated are sufficiently uncommon.

The spiral legs and cross stretchers of the somewhat heavy-looking table of our last illustration (Plate LIII.2) proclaim its period to be the very end of the seventeenth century, if not the early eighteenth. This table, mentioned elsewhere as probably Tunbridge work, has a top and frame geometrically inlaid with various woods, bone and ebony mosaic borders, and bone and ebony eight-pointed stars.

CHAPTER VIII

OAK CHAIRS OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

ENGLISH chairs of an earlier date than the seventeenth century, or perhaps the end of the sixteenth, are extremely rare. Before that, in all probability, very few were made. The head of the house was alone accommodated with a chair, and for the rest a bench was considered good enough. Time and usage might be expected to deal more hardly with this more movable piece of furniture than with the solid beds and tables and cabinets which remained as fixtures in one place. Not that the Elizabethan or Jacobean chair was a thing to be taken by one hand and placed conveniently for a *tête-à-tête*. The time for trifling and 'conversation chairs' had not yet arrived. We have to wait for the eighteenth century, and half-way through it, to see what could be done in the way of minute decoration and grace of outline. In the chair of the old oak period, the uncompromising squareness and stiffness of the main shape is but meagrely disguised by a parsimonious decoration. This is confined chiefly to the upper part of the chair, perhaps because that alone was to be seen above the table-top. It is possible, too, that the economy of lower decoration was due to a traditional avoidance of labour which might be wasted by the dirt and damp of the earlier rush-strewn floor, sometimes suggestively designated 'the marsh.' At any rate, the plainness of

the lower part, which is a usual feature of the oak chair, deprives the design to some extent of unity. The superiority of an Italian or French example, in this respect, is very noticeable. If we compare the French chair, No. 7211, from the Soulages Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum, dating perhaps from 1580, with our English ones, we can observe in it a greater sense of completeness. Its back is open, with two round arches which are repeated on the front, below the seat. The same shaped brackets appear above and below, and there is just sufficient addition of ornamental beading of edges, incised work, and applied prism-shaped blocks, to take away all suspicion of thinness, without rendering the design too 'busy.' Not a little inlay, of ebony and mother-of-pearl, in leaf and triangular shapes, adorns this chair, whose carving is good and in considerable relief. It would be difficult to find amongst English chairs one of such quality as this, which probably comes from the south of France, where a magnificent school of carving existed.

Nearest to it of our examples is the arm-chair of oak (Plate LIV. 1), with panelled back inlaid with floral scroll-work and birds, No. 229 in the Victoria and Albert Museum. This might be late sixteenth century, and with its fluted legs inlaid above, and the inlaid line of diamond-shapes on the front of the seat, is a decidedly exceptional chair. It should be compared with No. 22 in the same place, which is in many respects similar, but is not inlaid. The turned legs and arm-supports of this latter, with clumsy rings at equal intervals, are vastly inferior to the fluted pillars of the earlier chair. Both have those S-curved bracket-pieces on each side of the upper part of the back, which are so frequent an accompaniment of the heads of beds. In both the Courtenay bed, No. 404, and No. 316, which is of the same date (1593), these S-curves are to be seen. In the inlaid chair of our illustration the curves are

more graceful than in its companion of perhaps ninety years after (Plate LV.2), if the date carved upon it, 1670, is an authentic one. Here they are flattened, as we are to find them on the sides of many a subsequent mirror-frame, chimneypiece, or stone monument. The more graceful side-shape is to be seen on another chair, No. 231 in the Victoria and Albert Museum, but in this case the top rail curves are flattened like those of No. 22. A dated chair of 1668, lent by Violet, Lady Beaumont, to the Bethnal Green Exhibition of Furniture, had side-pieces with somewhat slighter S-curves, and these were pierced through with an opening resembling the half of a kite-shaped shield.

Every one of the five chairs mentioned has the same type of arm. It slopes downwards from the back, and has a concave curve in the middle, with a more or less emphasised curve on the lower side of the arm to correspond. There is often at the ends of the lower side-curve a very decided notch. This may be best seen in the reproduction (Plate LIV.2) of an arm-chair belonging to Mr. A. J. James, of Edgeworth Manor, Cirencester. This chair, dated 1631, and initialled W. S. W., has suffered from the effects of time. Its S side-pieces are missing, the abutment of one being plainly visible. It also wants its rails and the lower part of its legs. Even as it is, the bold and vigorous manner in which the S-curves at the top of the back are fashioned into dragons' heads on each side of a cartouche, and the rather exceptional elaboration of its main panel, make it a handsome relic. It has been up to the present time in the family which originally owned it, W. S. W. standing for William and Sarah Wiggle.

In this chair it may be noticed that the supports of the arms are rather higher than those of the chair in Plate LIII.2, which is fifty years later, and than those of LIII.3, also a late seventeenth-century chair. Those

of the chair in LIV.3 are also higher in proportion than most. This is of the earlier and rare 'caqueteuse' or 'conversational' type. It is generally supposed that higher arm-supports imply an earlier chair, but it stands to reason that considerations of convenience preclude any very marked differences of height. As for judging by the slant of the arms, it was probably a question of taste, as the variation between Nos. LIII.2 and LIII.3 seems to suggest.

An entirely different shape of arm is to be seen in the 'caqueteuse' chair belonging to Mr. J. E. Clifton, of Old Bank House, Swanage, Dorset. This example (Plate LIV.3), with a fan-patterned semicircle at the top of its back and heavy finials on each side, has arms practically without any slope, and flat on the top. To make up, they are sawn so as to spread out and form obtuse angles, thus making the chair much wider at the front than at the back. Consequently the back panel is a narrow one. The fan above is bordered with small circles overlapping, so as to form imbrications. The panel is carved with the fan pattern in a guilloched strap. There is a border of a close oblique guilloche or cable shape, and the same appears under the seat. All the planks of this chair vary in thickness, and show, perhaps, the results of splitting with a 'river.' It comes from Luke's Farm, near Romsey, Hants, whence also was taken the interesting bed in Mr. Clifton's possession, which has been described and reproduced. This type of chair may be compared with certain French chairs in the Victoria and Albert Museum. No. 740 is a walnut-wood chair with seat boxed in. Its back, like that of Mr. Clifton's chair, is narrow, and the arms curve to fit on to a broader front. Except for a coat of arms in the back panel, the leaf, circle, and other ornamentation might be English. This chair is assigned to the second half of the sixteenth century, at the end of which Mr. Clifton's chair

was very probably made. A very fine example of this bent-arm type may be seen in the chancel of the church near Athelhampton, close to Puddletown, Dorset. On the top of the back are two dogs leashed, and facing each other; and the back panel contains very good strap-work. A curious effect has been produced by the attempt to make a Charles II. open-backed chair and this 'caqueteuse' more of a pair. The angulated arms have been copied and added to the Charles II. example, with most incongruous results.

A somewhat exceptional chair (Plate LV.1) is in St. Michael's Church, St. Albans. This has a heavy semi-circular top-piece carved with a cherub's head and wings. The central panel is rather ingeniously filled with a kneeling cherub with extremely conventional folds in its gown.

The want of unity between the top and bottom of the oak chair to which I have referred, is well exemplified in an example (Plate LV.3) from the Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 230. The turning of the legs and arm-supports suggests that it was made not very long before, or after, the spiral-turned chair of Charles II. came into fashion. There appears to be a want of harmony between the turned work and the incised carving which that particular combination inherently entails.

The decorated front stretcher of the Charles II. chair was indeed a great invention for carrying out the scheme of the back design. It is to be noticed that in the chair dated 1670, which is mentioned earlier in this chapter, there is a more or less successful effort to adorn both the front of the seat and the front stretcher or rail, which is exactly what might be expected in a chair made at so late a date, when the cane-backed, spiral-turned Charles II. chair was well introduced.

Our series would be most incomplete without specimens of the chairs made for children. They are, of course,

longer in the leg, proportionately, than the adults' oak chair, and another peculiarity which their special use entails is very apparent in some examples. The base is made, for increase of stability, considerably broader than the top. No. 397 in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Plate LVI.1) is a very good instance, with a conventional flower-carved panel, and a semicircle on the upper and lower rails of the back. The round bosses on the lower back rail, and at each end of the seat, are somewhat peculiar. A stouter, more squat example (Plate LVI.2) was exhibited for some time in the Museum, and is reproduced in Mr. E. Chancellor's book of specimens of furniture. It has two acorn finials on the top of the back, and between them three small semicircles projecting above the top rail. Upon this is a guilloche. On the uprights are the upright leaf pattern, and on the lower rail a cable. The under side of the seat front is nicely shaped.

Much plainer, but still interesting, as being of a rather different type, is the example (Plate LVI.3) belonging to Mr. W. H. Bliss of Easton, Stamford. This is a straight-sided chair, and resembles more closely the children's chairs of the Charles II. period, which are no more remarkable for breadth of base.

The settle may conveniently here be mentioned. It will be seen from our illustration (Plate LVII.1) that its ornamentation and general shape are very similar to that of the chair. There are the side brackets which, in this particular instance, are not S-curves. The arms are exactly of the curved and notched type, and the lower part well exemplifies the objection which I have made to the chair design of this period, that it tends to ornament the upper at the expense of the lower part.

This specimen is in the possession of Sir Charles Robinson, Newton Manor, Swanage, Dorset. A good one of the same type is illustrated by Mr. Litchfield in his *History of Furniture*, and is there said to be pro-

bably from Yorkshire. We hear occasionally of elaborate specimens of oak settles with very tall backs, and sometimes a cupboard in them, and a box under the seat. Those who refer to them like to call them 'Monks' settles.' In that case they should be Pre-Reformation objects. The writer has never had the good fortune to come across one or even to see an illustration of any authentic specimen. In the south transept of Winchester Cathedral are two settles of early date, but they do not answer the description of the 'Monks' settle,' though monks may have sat on them. One is very long and massive, with a back formed of two uprights and a cross-piece. The uprights are finished with what once were crosses. The ends of the arms are circular, and carved each with a flower of six slender-pointed petals. The back is filled in with shingles, after the fashion of a clinch-built boat. The other settle is shorter and of later date, without ornament of any kind. It is impossible to attribute a decided genuineness to the only example of a settle which is at present in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The writer is inclined to the opinion that most 'Monks' settles,' so called, would turn out to be concoctions made out of old bedsteads.

A settle and table combined is reproduced here (Plate LVII.2, 3) from the collection of the Rev. F. Meyrick-Jones, 292 Lancaster Road, Notting Hill. This is uncarved, and has a boxed-in seat. The flanges in the back have a long slit in the lower half, into which fits a peg on the inside of the back of the arm. The back is raised and drawn forwards to serve as a table top as far as the play of the peg in the slit allows. It would not be easy to say precisely at what time in the seventeenth century this interesting example was made.

It is probable that the step from solid-backed chairs to those with open backs and rails was not made all at once. There seems to be an intermediate stage, in which arms first disappear, and then the back, left solid above,

is opened below. Good examples are reproduced from the Victoria and Albert Museum. No. 244 (Plate LVIII.) is an armless solid-backed chair with its upper rail shaped in a fashion which appears to have been popular in the northern counties, especially Lancashire.

The next stage is very well shown by another Lancashire chair, No. 248 (Plate LVIII.), with extremely similar top rail, which in this case has a central incised ornament. In this chair two-fifths of the back have disappeared, and the field for the carver is considerably restricted. Neither example nor their companions, Nos. 243 and 2471, show very much to boast of on the panel at which in solid-backed chairs we are accustomed first to look, in order to judge how the carver has acquitted himself where he has widest scope. With the disappearance of opportunities, the inventiveness of the carver perhaps diminished, until a different style presented itself in the cane-backed chair, with possibilities of something fresh. We cannot but regret the abandonment of those broad surfaces roughened with ridgy carving which catch the light in a manner so delightful to the eye as they project from their ground. Yet this rough-hewn, solid, weighty style, after a long day, had said its last word. Something new was required, more in keeping with a wide increase in the amenities of life. Those monumental chairs were suited to what John Evelyn in his diary describes as the 'old English hospitality,' which, he says, was matched by the character of the houses of the period of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth. Heavy, rough furniture which would stand unlimited wear and tear was necessary to such house-keeping as that—a real habit of life—not a mere empty phrase. Under date of October 4, 1699, Evelyn mentions the death of his brother at Wotton, 'of so hospitable a nature, that no family in the county maintained that antient custom of keeping, as it were, open house the whole yeare in the same manner, or gave more noble or

free entertainment to the county on all occasions, so that his house was never free. There were sometimes 20 persons more than his family, and some that staid there all the summer, to his no small expence; by this he gain'd the universal love of the county'—and small wonder too. Nor was he an entirely exceptional instance, for Evelyn mentions but a few pages further on the Carews of Beddington, who used to practise that same liberality which was 'now decaying with the house itself.'

We need not, however, accuse the succeeding rail-backed chair of an excessive fragility. It was still strong, though it had largely lost the look of strength which broad surfaces of oak afforded. The defect of these railed chairs seems rather to lie in the inability of their carvers to supply on the restricted ground a delicacy of carving which should make up in finesse for the boldly sketched panel patterns of their forerunners. A Grinling Gibbons had yet to be discovered 'by mere accident' by the same Evelyn whom I have quoted, unobtrusively carving miracles in a 'poor solitary thatched house in a field in our parish, near Sayes Court.' The genius of that young man prepared the way for the finished excellence of the mahogany period.

It is curious that the next, and very important, development of the half solid-backed chair to the open-backed one with rails seems to belong also to the northern counties of Derbyshire and Yorkshire. There is no district in the south of England noted for its achievements in this style. It is hardly to be supposed that the change to railed chairs took place in these northern counties from a difficulty in obtaining a supply of oak. Perhaps the number of half-timbered houses built in the sixteenth century may have helped to reduce the available quantity of timber. They are to be found abundantly in Cheshire and also in Lancashire, if not in Derbyshire and Yorkshire. The perennial supply of

oak-trees in such districts as the New Forest (from whence so much timber was used for the navy during the wars at the end of the eighteenth century) might account for the absence of the rail-backed chair in the south of England. Be this as it may, Derbyshire and Yorkshire seem to have led the fashion in rail-backed chairs, and the Victoria and Albert Museum can again show typical examples. They are all armless, as might be expected. No. 85 (Plate LIX.1) has a semi-circular top to its back between uprights which taper and curve into a little volute at the ends. This volute, to judge from the examples before us, is as characteristic as the little squat finial of the Lancashire chair. In the semicircle is a flower incised with branching leaves on both sides. Below this comes an arcading of three semi-circular beaded arches supported on slender turned pilasters, and resting on a cross-rail with straight upper edge, and shaped with curves and a semicircle on the under side. This lower part is most decidedly suggestive of the approach of the Charles II. style. It is practically identical in general shape, for instance, with the under-seat ornament of the handsome cane-backed walnut chair reproduced (Plate LIX.2) from the collection of Mr. Vincent Robinson. The present chair may be considered the humble farmhouse relation of that brilliantly carved example.

The Lancashire top seems to be a Flemish inspiration, as also does the arcading of the Derbyshire chair. An inspection of the Flemish chairs, Nos. 8123 and 443 in the Victoria and Albert Museum, will lead to that conclusion. The first is a folding chair on X-shaped supports of about the date of 1660; the other with double arcading is dated 1678. No. 242 in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Plate LIX.2) is a chair of the same date as No. 85 mentioned above, whose carved top rail reminds us of the Charles II. cane chair. It even

approaches a step nearer, perhaps, as it discards the arcading, and has in its place four uprights by way of splats. Beyond a slight beading these are undecorated, and fit into a plain lower cross rail. We shall find that in the Charles II. chair, with cane in the back, the ornament runs along on both sides of perpendicular back pieces, and we do not again find cross rails in the back, except those at top and bottom, until we come to Chippendale's four-cross-barred chair. The extra heaviness of No. 233 in the Victoria and Albert Museum, the other arcaded chair reproduced (Plate LIX.3), and the nature of its lower back rail, mark it as earlier perhaps than those we have described. It is noticeable that it has turned half-pilasters applied to the uprights, and acorn-shaped finials on its back rails.

With both of these features we meet in the Yorkshire chair, which is the least English-looking of all the chairs of the old oak period. This is due to the curious horseshoe-shaped cut in the centre of the cross rails of that which we reproduce (Plate LIX.3), No. 232 Victoria and Albert Museum. This somewhat resembles the Moorish arch, broad above and contracted below. It accounts for the somewhat exotic appearance of these chairs, more marked when, as in the case of a pair in the possession of Sir Charles Robinson, there are three cross rails, each with two horseshoe cuts. Above each horseshoe cut is a solid semicircle, but not scalloped with smaller ones as in the Museum specimen. A rudely incised human face is a characteristic to be found in the centre of the cross pieces of these Yorkshire chairs, and in our example the spiral ornamentation incised upon them is suggestive of a Celtic reminiscence. Generally the Yorkshire chair has a slightly sunk seat, and though it is sometimes of large size, its open, railed construction has made it a very much lighter object than its solid-backed forerunner. A mercantile connection

of Yorkshire with Scandinavia may have something to do with the design of this class of chair.

To the intermediate stage of half-solid backs belongs a remarkable set of very high oak chairs (Plate LX.1), Nos. 406-408 in the Victoria and Albert Museum. These have solid backs, except for about a foot above the seat. The upper frame of the back has a small arcade of six incised arches, the back has two panels, the lower of which is sunk more deeply in its frame than the upper. This arrangement is not uncommon, and gives a certain variety to the surface of the back. The top of the back is fairly straight, but is shaped with a jutting semicircle to break the straight in the centre, and curves to serve the same purpose at the ends. In the upper panels of these chairs are the arms of Thomas Wentworth, 1st Earl of Strafford, a crown and shield with motto incised 'En dieu est tout.' This serves to give us an approximate date for the chairs, as his execution took place in the year 1641. Dating, then, from perhaps 1630 *circa*, these chairs, which have some little inlay upon the lower part of the back, and decorated front stretchers between turned front legs, seem to offer very early promise of the transition to the style of the Charles II. chair which we shall shortly have to deal with.

The wave of austerity brought by the Commonwealth, 1649-1660, probably did something to check the natural evolution of English furniture. That a change was taking place in the style of oak chairs, those of Strafford seem to indicate. Then came the death of Charles I. and the Puritan ascendancy, which enforced plainness even upon furniture-makers. The complete change of tone in morals and manners which the reaction against the Puritans, and the Restoration, brought about, marks such a sudden difference between Cromwellian and Charles II. furniture, as to incline the casual observer to fancy that there was no intermediate step. Indeed

the general use of cane for backs and seats, and the lightness of the open scroll-work of the period of Charles II., does make a great, and apparently sudden, difference between the latter style and its forerunners. As usual, however, we may conclude that even in this case there is no strict dividing line. Cane was perhaps expensive at first, and old fashions held their own in the country. This would be enough to account for the existence of such a chair as that at Newton Manor, Dorset, here described. This chair (Plate LX.3) has a high, though solid, back. In the centre of the top of the back appears the favourite crown of the Charles II. chair. There are two crossed wheat-ears below it and acanthus-carved curves on both sides. For finials there are round knobs. The main panel has a poor incised pattern of a rectangle with a diamond—its poverty symptomatic of a change which was to be to the prejudice of the earlier fine incised work. Below this panel is a sunk arch—blunt pointed—and for that reason somewhat peculiar. The arms are rounded and curved, ending in elementary volutes similar to those on the typical Charles II. arm-chair. The legs are turned, and it is to be noticed that there are three cross rails, of which the two front ones are turned, and the third, which joins the back legs, plain rectangular. This extra rail is another reminder of the Charles II. chair, in which the front one is often too elaborate a piece of carving to be properly called a rail. Its function is chiefly ornamental, but behind it may often be seen two simple turned ones, one low down and joining the centre of the side rails, which stretch from front legs to back, the other higher up, and connecting the back legs at a few inches below the seat. In this hybrid chair the ornamental rail, or rather stretcher, of a Charles II. chair has not yet been arrived at, and the extra cross rail is on the same level as those between the front legs and also between the back legs. It is,

however, the only solid-backed oak chair in our selection which has an extra cross rail, and its other peculiarities, which seem to anticipate the Restoration style, render it a most interesting link.

It is necessary to remember here, that the old oak style did not come to a sudden end when cane chairs were introduced. The solid-backed chair in the Victoria and Albert Museum which is reproduced (Plate LV.2) bears the date of 1670, and if, as seems quite probable, this is an authentic date, it affords a good example of the persistence of the style of the early seventeenth century. We may regard this hybrid chair, then, either as the utmost concession of an old and conservative workman to the new fashion, or else as the first attempt of a younger one to emancipate himself from the pattern of his forefathers, after seeing an example of the new style. Exceptional instances of chairs are likely to occur occasionally. Such, for instance, is a walnut example formerly in the possession of Mr. Stuart S. Samuel, from Old Colne Priory, Essex. The back is formed by a piece of leather stretched between two rectangular uprights, and stamped with a lion, an eagle, and foliage. The seat is also formed of a piece of leather loosely stretched across, and decorated with scroll ornament. A row of four slender turned pilasters connects two straining rails, which join the front legs. The arms, supported by prolongations of the perfectly plain front legs, are two broad and flat planks of wood about six inches wide. The legs stand on stretchers which join a back leg to a front, and lie close on the floor. This chair, said to be of about 1650, was exhibited at Bethnal Green in 1896.

If a vast mass of old oak furniture could be gathered together, the repetition of ornamental details and general shapes, which helps to bind the productions of any age with the link of an all-pervading style,

would be more conspicuous than a perplexing variety of motives. On the other hand, I think it would be safe to say that very few Elizabethan or Jacobean or seventeenth century chairs will be found exactly alike. Pairs of chairs are not common, and sets practically unknown till the cane-backed period. The suite of 'six, and two arm-chairs' in which auctioneers delight is a phenomenon of the mahogany era. A set of solid-backed oak chairs would perhaps turn out to have been made out of superior discarded church pews. Finally, when comparing the stiffness and want of concession to human anatomy, which is characteristic of chairs of the oak period, with the superiority of the eighteenth century product in this respect, we must remember that there was no lack of cushions and even fixed upholstery in the seventeenth century to mitigate the defect.

CHAPTER IX

CHESTS OF DRAWERS IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

THE chest of drawers marks a distinct advance in the conveniences of household arrangements and in the constructive skill of English joiners which was required to meet a new demand. It is remarkable that the development did not take place earlier, since cabinets with drawers innumerable had been made for royal and noble personages long before the middle of the seventeenth century, the date to which the chest of drawers evolved from the plain chest may be assigned.

It is reasonable to suppose, for instance, that a 'rich ebony cabbinett with gilded fixtures' and 'a very large ebony cabinet' inventoried amongst the goods confiscated from Corfe Castle, Dorset, in 1643-4, were fitted with drawers. It may be noticed, at the same time (Bankes's *Story of Corfe Castle*, p. 250), that there is great mention of 'trunks' containing various articles of blankets, linen, and clothes. Now, these are not necessarily what we understand by 'trunks,' *i.e.* plain boxes used for travelling and storage. One of them is described as being 'a very large trunke, inlay'd all over with mother of pearl.' Considering the size of the contents of some of them, *e.g.*: 'One suit of hangings, a rich watchet damask lined with blew cloth, 9 pieces, and one carpet,' it is reasonable to suppose that these 'trunks' are what we call coffers or chests.

If so, they were in pretty general use in Corfe Castle in 1640, and were still more frequent, apparently, than chests of drawers. Mrs. Frances Clary Morse, in *Furniture of the Olden Time*, says that chests *with* drawers are mentioned in documents as existing in the American colonies as early as 1650, and that the greater number of chests found in New England have one or two drawers. We may then, perhaps, consider that the middle of the seventeenth century was the period at which the regular chest of drawers was fully evolved in England. It is impossible to assign definite dates. On the first page of his introduction to the catalogue of the exhibition of furniture at Bethnal Green in 1896, Mr. J. H. Pollen reminds us: 'As to dates, it must be noted that furniture and cabinet work, though stamped in some instances with makers' names, are not dated as hall-marked silver is. Dates are rare on cabinets, beds, or tables; if found they are suspicious, but genuine dates are too seldom met with to enable us to range these objects with such confidence as we could arrange silver spoons and cups.' The makers' names to which he refers are, of course, mostly those of France and the eighteenth century. A maker's name on a piece of English furniture is rare indeed, and may be said never to occur except in the end of the eighteenth century and afterwards. Exception may be made in the cases of clocks and musical instruments, and in each of these instances it is the mechanism to which the attention is chiefly intended to be drawn.

It would seem that decorative freehand carving of leafage, flowers, and conventional shapes, the chief ornament of chests, is not a characteristic of the complete chest of drawers. Why this should be so it is not very easy to say, but the fact remains that incised work is not very frequently found. It is much more common to see the more numerous, but at the same time more restricted, spaces of the chest of drawers

relying for their decoration upon mouldings and raised and splayed panels. Amongst our illustrations incised carving occurs on the example belonging to Mr. Seymour Lucas, R.A. (Plate LXI.). This is a remarkable specimen, and has very little carved work indeed. Its upper part is a chest, and underneath are three drawers. Bordering all the panels is inlay in rectangular shapes of small size similar to that on the heavy table (Plate LI.), No. 384 in the Victoria and Albert Museum. This table is unquestionably of the very early seventeenth century, if not earlier still. The similarity of the inlay, together with the heavy gadroon moulding, with rough acanthus leaf corner-pieces, of the central upper panel upon the chest of drawers, would incline one to think it of equally early date. Yet the number of drawers, or rather the proportionate space they occupy, is somewhat excessive for a very early piece, and the carving, especially of the acanthus leaf corners of the gadrooned moulding, is rather rough. It might therefore be safer to attribute to this handsome specimen a date of about 1610. The turned half-pendants, bosses, and diamonds laid on thin wood indicate a Flemish influence in the design.

It seems so reasonable to expect decorative carving upon chests of drawers, which were being made contemporaneously with chests, that it would be unsafe to deny the existence of authentic specimens. But while the earlier 'chest *with* drawers' was turning into 'a chest of drawers,' a change was also taking place from incised decoration to decoration chiefly by means of mouldings and their arrangement. At least one incised chest of drawers made of oak, if not more, was exhibited at Bethnal Green in 1896. It had, alternately, shallow and deep drawers. In the shallow drawers the carving covered the whole of the front, in the deep drawers the fronts were boldly and broadly splayed in the usual manner of uncarved specimens, such as

No. 70 in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Plate LXIII.), and the carved leaf and flower work was confined to a small rectangle in the centre. A guilloche ran up the stiles at the sides, the centre ones being florally carved. Beneath the top slab were three brackets, which, in the next example, will be found to be put to a very practical use. These were also florally carved, and there were reminiscences of classical triglyphs just as they may be seen upon Mr. Seymour Lucas's specimen. Originally the drawers of this chest of drawers are said to have been opened by touching a spring, and there were two secret drawers.

At the present time, when banks are at hand and innumerable forms of investment are continually being offered to every one who has saved a little money, it is difficult to realise the trouble there was in earlier days to dispose of cash. At one time men turned their bullion into gold plate, until the inconvenience of the practice, from a financial point of view, caused government to make enactments against it. Strong-boxes such as that supposed to be 'King John's Money-Box' at Rockingham Castle were for many generations a much-used article, upon which the locksmith exercised his ponderous ingenuity. 'So late as the time of the Restoration every trader,' says Macaulay (vol. i. p. 479, ed. 1873), 'had his own strong-box in his own house,' and 'in the earlier part of the reign of William III., all the greatest writers on currency were of opinion that a very considerable mass of gold and silver was hidden in secret drawers and behind wainscots' (vol. i. p. 395). In 1696 the evil due to the hoarding of money was most acute, and we should be prepared to find the furniture of all this period as cunningly provided with hiding-places as an old clock was with mechanical conceits. I imagine that the one made its possessor about as sure of his time as the other would make him of his money. Both must have been the source of constant anxiety.

A chest of drawers (Plate LXII.) in the possession of Mr. V. B. Crowther-Beynon, of Edith Weston, introduces us not only to the new style of decoration by mouldings, but also to a new characteristic, which is not uncommonly found upon examples apparently of an early period in the seventeenth century. It will be noticed that beneath the cornice of the top slab there are moulded brackets. The largest member in each of these is fashioned into a round tube which serves as an admirable handle when the forefinger is inserted. The hollow arrangement can be seen end on at the sides. In the same village there is a simpler example similarly fitted. This one is a very elaborately moulded specimen, with small arches in the four main panels. The variety shown in the disposition of the mouldings, and the architectural quality suggested by the brackets and the jutting plinth, make this an example quite beyond the ordinary chest of drawers of this type. The large use of dental courses, both horizontal and perpendicular, is a point to be noticed along with the two long and narrow arches, and the two 'double' ones on the second drawer from the bottom. It should be mentioned that in the cornice, under the top slab, are various small unobtrusive drawers of secret intent.

This example compares well in general lines with No. 70 in the Victoria and Albert Museum, of four long drawers (Plate LXIII.). In this the brackets and jutting plinth are entirely absent, and the various tiers are rather unnecessarily emphasised by the mouldings which run straight across the front. None the less this is an effective piece, its boldly raised and splayed panels catching the light in a very striking way. It may be set down as late seventeenth century. Given a plain plinth instead of its raised frame with drawers, it will afford a good idea of the usual early chest of drawers, if the somewhat elaborate mouldings of the deepest

drawer were as simple as the rest. The large panel with heavy moulding on the side need cause us no surprise by its presence at this date. We may regard this example, standing as it does on a 'frame' with spiral-turned legs, as the immediate precursor of those plain-fronted, tall chests of drawers upon six legs with which the early eighteenth century will familiarise us. These in their turn will serve as the last link between the early single chest of drawers and the final and monumental development of the double chest of drawers, or 'tall-boy,' of the mahogany period.

If proof were needed of the difficulty of dating furniture of the kind described, it might be found in two examples, drawn to scale by Mr. J. W. Hurrell, in his useful book of *Measured Drawings of Old Oak English Furniture.* The first is a chest with one tier of two drawers beneath it, in the possession of Mr. James Broster, of Leek. It has geometrically disposed applied mouldings on its panels, and turned 'half-pendants' applied to its stiles. Upon it is the name of Ann Lightfoot, and the date of 1702. The second, belonging to Mr. Hurrell himself, is also a chest with one tier of two drawers beneath. This has no applied half-pendants on its stiles, but is fitted with heavily raised and splayed drawer fronts. The chest part proper has a rail carved with a pattern which might belong to the early seventeenth century. Its three panels are carved also, and bordered by that familiar rhomboidal pattern of light and dark woods inlaid, which is found on many chests of much earlier date than that which is inlaid on the stiles of this one, namely, 1700. An ogee in the panel mouldings also indicates a period later than the carving would suggest. These two instances, if we may rely on them, would show that chests with one tier of drawers had by no means been ousted from use in favour of fully developed chests of drawers, even at a time when tall

specimens of the latter upon raised frames were being made without a vestige of incised work or 'turned half-pendants' upon them.

In the second half of the seventeenth century must be placed the oaken specimen (Plate LXIV.) communicated by Messrs. Waring, a chest with one drawer. The upper part has a central panel with very similarly disposed mouldings to those on the bottom of Mr. Crowther-Beynon's chest, or on the deep drawer of No. 70 in the Victoria and Albert Museum. It has a heavy raised and splayed panel on its ends—an infallible sign that it is not to be classed with early seventeenth century oak—and it rests on a frame with X-cross stretchers curved, and legs turned, in a manner to suggest a still later period. We are reminded of certain architecturally designed chests of the sixteenth century, such as an unique one of 1556 in the church of St. Mary Overie, Southwark, by the pediments with finials at the end, which appear upon the two smaller panels of the front. But this chest is far less elaborate, and, moreover, henceforth we shall find a broken pediment constantly recurring upon the tops of bureaus, cabinets, and clocks. The frame is perhaps of later date than the upper part, but no great difference exists between them.

This chapter concludes with an exceptional and very picturesque chest with drawers (Plate LXV., No. 497 in the Victoria and Albert Museum). For once we have a change from the wooden surface. This is covered with brown leather, and round-headed brass nails are the chief means of simply producing a very effective result. Besides the scrolls and rosettes of the front there is upon the top the monogram of William and Mary surmounted by a crown, also in brass nails. At the sides are massive drop handles for convenience of moving. Angle pieces and lock-plates of brass add to the decorative scheme, and remind us of the cabinets

of lacquer, either Japanese or European imitations, which also rely for their effect largely upon their gilded brass work, applied in this identical manner. Leather-covered decorative furniture of an extremely elaborate kind was made long before this period in Italy, as may be judged from the exquisite Milanese specimen belonging to Mr. George Salting, long on loan at South Kensington. Velvet, too, was used. Mr. Fred Roe, mentioning on page 111 of *Ancient Coffers and Cupboards* its introduction into England during the sixteenth century, says that at Kimbolton Castle, Hunts, there still exists a travelling chest which once belonged to Katharine of Aragon. This is, like our leather one, decorated with the queen's initials and a crown, and has remained at the castle since 1535. Another leather trunk made for a Duke of Dorset, to serve as his chest of office as Lord Treasurer, is at Knole, Kent.

CHAPTER X

THE RESTORATION: CHAIRS AND SILVER FURNITURE

WITH the Restoration we arrive at a turning point in the history of English furniture. The amateur of English oak chests and cabinets and tables cannot but have felt that until now the objects of his love have, except in a few exceptional cases, been at a disadvantage when compared with their analogues in foreign countries. He may have consoled himself with the reflection that, unobtrusive and unambitious as it is, the woodwork of the English joiner has hitherto been the natural outcome of our poorer and less polished society; but he must have harboured an occasional wish that he could find an English chest which would hold its own against an Italian cassone, or a cabinet worthy of comparison with those of the school of Toulouse. With the exception of one or two specimens at Hardwick, and a few perhaps elsewhere, there is nothing in the history of English furniture up to the end of the seventeenth century which for completeness of design and finish can be mentioned in the same breath with the masterpieces of the Continent. Even as from the introduction of oil painting into England—whatever the precise date may be—our monarchs relied upon foreign artists to depict themselves and the beauties of their courts, and no English painter of genius was for many generations to arise, so for the ornament of our furniture we have been largely indebted to foreign influence, and no

English cabinetmaker has left a name. It has been, on one side, a monotonous story of naïve adoption of such continental graces as our generally awkward hands could copy; on the other, a certain insular prejudice has preserved us from complete subservience to our model: and the result has been a compromise which shows itself in the insufficient design, but honest workmanship, of our cabinets and tables and chairs. Useful, strong, enduring, unassuming—above all, not vulgar or pretentious, are the epithets which most naturally suggest themselves when we review the furniture of the Elizabethan and Jacobean period. Sumptuousness and magnificence were not to be found readily in a country which had been so unsettled until the reign of Henry VII.; and, with few exceptions, the furniture which remains to us of all the periods which we have had under review, must be taken as characteristic of a country that was behind its rivals in the elegances of civilisation. Yet with all the want of finesse and invention betrayed by the English carver and joiner, there has been hitherto a stamp of national character about his work which is undeniable, however he may have lumbered after foreign design.

Now begins, after a period of civil wars and national impoverishment, a period when, if there was not more money in the country, at any rate much money was again spent at court, and foreign fashions were imported wholesale. The change is in nothing more apparent than in the extraordinary difference between the old oak chair and that known as of the style of Charles II. It seems at first one of radical alteration, but, as was hinted in the previous chapter on chairs, it was not so sudden as it might appear. If we bear in mind the armless, half solid-backed chairs made in Lancashire and Derbyshire (Plates LVIII., LIX.), we shall be prepared for a class of chair which is associated with the name of Cromwell, and the idea of which (or probably the thing

itself) was imported from Holland. It is simply necessary to imagine the upper part of a half solid-backed Lancashire chair upholstered with leather, and its seat also covered with the same material, which is fastened with round-headed brass nails, to have an idea of the 'Cromwellian' chair before one. It may be seen, over and over again, depicted with the utmost fidelity in the pictures of the little Dutch masters. The legs are of the usual turned description, with rectangular parts where the cross rails fit into them.

A leather-backed and seated oak chair (No. 94, Victoria and Albert Museum) is reproduced in Plate LXVI.1, and answers to the description, except in one particular. It has a carved front stretcher rudely imitating a cherub's head and wings, and those successors to the S-curve of the old oak period, which we shall find are a special characteristic of the chair of about 1690. The cherub's head we may assign, perhaps, to about 1670, and the general shape of the chair to the time of the Commonwealth. It well shows the connection which must have existed between one fashion and another.

If we next look at the very tall-backed chairs in the Victoria and Albert Museum which belonged to the Earl of Strafford (Plate LX.1), and which must be approximately dated 1630, we shall find that on them, too, is a semicircular front stretcher, which is much more in keeping with the style of the Charles II. cane-backed chair than with that of the solid oak period, to which it actually belongs. The abnormal tallness and narrowness of general shape will also suggest a relationship to the taller of our illustrations of cane-backed chairs. That, for instance, which belongs to Sir Charles Robinson (Plate LXVII.1), happens to have a carved front stretcher which, though it is pierced and more elaborate, is of the same semicircular outline as that of the Strafford chairs. As it is the narrowest of

our types, and therein most resembles the Strafford chair, so it is the only cane chair which has so semicircular a stretcher. Mrs. Morse, *Furniture of the Olden Time*, p. 144, says that cane furniture was introduced about 1678. It would be interesting to learn upon what authority so precise a date may rest. In default of definite information as to the time at which cane was imported into England, and in the presence of numerous chairs, with cane backs and seats, and with similar details to those which appear upon an object of which the date can be approximately stated, it seems fairly certain that cane was known twenty, perhaps thirty, years earlier. The object to which I refer is the air-pump (Plate LXVII.2) used by Robert Boyle in his experiments, and presented by him to the Royal Society in 1660. This was lent by the Royal Society to the exhibition of furniture at Bethnal Green in 1896. If the date of its presentation is authentic, it will be somewhat of a surprise for many to learn that cross stretchers of the quality and shape of the carving on this pump were made so early. The pillars at the back are turned with practically the same shape as those in the back of the handsome chair reproduced (Plate LXIX.1) from Kingsbridge Church, South Devon, which would be dated by most, perhaps, as late as 1690. Small resemblances such as these, of a part of an object, say of 1660, to a part of another presumably of 1690, tend to show that fashions changed slowly, and that a matter of thirty years brought very little difference in its course. It enables us also to understand how, when the style of the town was that of cane-backed chairs, that of the country may still have been one of solid-backed examples.

One reason for this change of fashion is not far to seek. The restored king, Charles II., had lived much abroad. He married a Portuguese wife, and the influence of France and Portugal between them is answerable for

the introduction of the new style. No one can examine one of those high-backed, black, stamped leather-covered chairs, studded with large round-headed brass nails, known as Portuguese, without seeing a resemblance to our chairs of Charles II. Neither can we fail to notice that the spiral-turned stretcher, which is one of their chief characteristics, is very frequent upon Portuguese furniture. As usual, however, it is difficult to say whence the spiral turning originally came. Mr. J. H. Pollen, in his introduction to the catalogue of furniture and woodwork in the Victoria and Albert Museum, reproduces a chair of short-backed 'Cromwellian' or Dutch type, with spiral-turned legs and stretchers, which was not uncommon in Italy about the year 1620.

A stimulant to the making of new furniture was afforded by the wholesale wreckings of the Civil War. '*Mercurius Rusticus*, or the Countries Complaint of the barbarous outrages committed by the Sectaries of this late flourishing Kingdom,' tells us that 'a few hours disrobe' Sir John Lucas's house 'of that rich furniture that had adorned it many years.' The Countess of Rivers's house at St. Osyth was a rich prize. The Parliamentarians pulled down, cut in pieces, and carried away her costly hangings, beds, couches, chairs, and the whole furniture of her house. Her loss there and at Melford, in Suffolk, was said to have been £100,000 or £150,000. Sir Richard Minshull's house at Bourton, Bucks, 'held many suits of the rich hangings, etc., of three houses, Sir Richard having disrobed two houses, one in Essex, the other in London.' All locks and keys and hinges were taken away by such wreckers as those who at Warder Castle, Wilts, which was besieged and taken, 'utterly defaced and beat down with poleaxes all the carved work of an extraordinary chimneypiece—amongst many rich ones—and valued at £2000.' Not much was likely to be spared by plunderers who at Westminster Abbey broke down

the organ, and went up and down the streets pretending to blow the pipes. 'Boys,' they said to the choristers, whose surplices they had already stolen, 'Boys, we have spoiled your trade, you must go and sing Hot Pudding Pyes.' What was bad for one trade was probably good for another, and there must have been a great demand for new furniture when the Royalists came by their own again.[1]

The most obvious difference between the new style and that of the old oak, in principles of design, is the greater unity and homogeneity of the newer. I have dwelt on the fact that in the old oak chair the ornament is chiefly and generally to be found on the upper part, and that in consequence there is a want of complete ensemble in the decorative scheme. Incised carving above and turned legs below do not sufficiently support each other, and this may, I think, be regarded as a defect which any new style, if it was to show points of easy superiority, was bound to correct. In the Charles II. chair and its immediate forerunner this defect is certainly most radically corrected, and, indeed, it does not reappear to any extent, except perhaps in those chairs of Chippendale style in which an ornate back is fitted to plain legs, in the subsequent history of English furniture. On the other hand, if in our review of Elizabethan and Jacobean oak we have come to the conclusion that amongst the usual and characteristic types the number and variety of patterns was not extremely large, and that certain shapes, as that of the guilloche and the S-curve and the semicircle, recur over and over again, we are also compelled to admit that the varieties of detail in Charles II. chairs of the ordinary kind are more limited still. It is easier to find chairs of this period which are practically alike, than in the periods of old English oak. There seems to be even more of the all-embracing influence of a

[1] The Fire of London (1666) must also be taken into account.

style which sets its mark upon every object of applied art, and confines it to a narrow mould, than there was in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods.

I do not mean to imply that the difference in this respect between the two periods under comparison was very great. If, however, we agree that wherever and by whomsoever the cabinets and chests and chairs of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods were made, there was always a touch of local variety and a certain independence of idea to be found, that local variety and freedom of decorative motive seem almost entirely absent in the furniture of the later Stuart period. It is as if some master-mind, like that of Lebrun in French art of the period of Louis XIV., had laid it down that crowns, cherubs, and C-curves should constitute practically the entire stock-in-trade of the Charles II. chair-maker, and that if there is a crown above, it shall appear also below. It may be, indeed, that the slightly greater variety claimed for the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods is more apparent than real. The very defect, that is, of an older oak chair which cuts the design into two pieces, incised above and turned below, may be giving rise to this notion of greater variety and freedom in the earlier executant's choice.

In another respect, the new style introduced a great advantage. It was an incomparably lighter style, not only in appearance, but in actual weight. This is due to two causes. One is the banishment of the solid back, and the final substitution of the open uprights and rails. The other cause is the introduction of cane work for backs and seats. Aesthetically, the cane back, or part of a back, is not a success. Nothing can make the plaited cane look worthy of its surroundings. For the seat much more is to be said, aesthetically and hygienically, and very little against it. It is true that it necessitates a straight line along the front and sides of the seat which a stuffed cushion mitigates, but if the

lower edge of the seat front be diversified, we can appreciate the contrast of a straight line above.

I cannot find any evidence as to the date at which cane was imported into England. Of the calamus, or genus of palms used to make the cane of commerce, there are about two hundred species. They come chiefly from the hotter parts of the East Indies, but which particular one of the many different kinds are used for the thin split lengths of cane seats and chair-backs, it is difficult to say. To the successful trading of the Dutch in their highest prosperity, 1650 *circa*, is probably due the introduction of this useful material from the sometimes thousand-feet-long creepers of tropical forests.

In the new style of chair, which continued in full use until the reign of Queen Anne, when a plainer shape supervened, the straight upper edge common in the old oak period disappears. Its place is taken by a shaped top more akin to the scrolled or S-topped examples of that earlier time. This top is supported by two turned uprights, and between them is a back, either carved and pierced with open curves, or else filled in with cane-work or stuffed and covered. If the back is a carved one, its entire width, including the two turned uprights, consists in many typical chairs of five perpendicular pieces divided by spaces. In the centre is a broad band of open carving, about nine inches wide. On either side of this comes a narrower perpendicular, also carved, and outside of each of these is the turned upright first mentioned. The bottom of the back is supported by carved ornamentation, generally very similar to that on the top of the back.

A special feature of the typical chair is the ornamental stretcher between the front legs. It cannot be described as a foot-rail, as it arches up in a manner which is inconvenient for the foot to rest upon. Neither is it of any great use for strengthening the

chair, as the work is so much pierced and open. Consequently it will be found that behind this front stretcher, which merely serves the purpose of repeating the design of the upper and lower ends of the back, there is sometimes another serviceable stretcher set parallel to the front one, and joined to the centres of those which connect the back and front legs. These three stretchers for use, unlike the broad and high front one for show, are turned, like the outer uprights of the back. In nothing so much as in this ornamental front stretcher is the resemblance of the Charles II. chair so apparent to its Portuguese exemplar and original.

The typical chair which I am describing is neither the most grandiose and elaborate, nor the simpler and commoner form, but holds a middle place between the two. There are very many still extant with the characteristics mentioned. A special and inveterate feature of the outer uprights of the back and of the legs is a leaf ornament, which may be described as an elongated rosette. It is found upon the square portions which diversify these turned legs and uprights, as, for instance, just below the finials at the curved top of the back, and also on a level with the similar curved ornaments at the bottom of the back. It is also often placed upon the square member of the top of the leg just below the seat, or on the similar member at the bottom of the leg. In the case of chairs with arms, these are curved and rounded off at the ends. The uncompromising edges and angles of the arms of the older oak chair have quite disappeared, and very frequently on good specimens there is acanthus leaf carving along the arms.

The larger features of ornamentation have been mentioned before. A typical detail is the crown, sometimes supported by cherubs, an emblem which perhaps became popular when that extraordinary and complete

reaction against the Republican sentiments of the Commonwealth took effect, and resulted in the recall of Charles II., and an attitude towards the principle of monarchy such as for the time caused people to forget all the illegalities of Charles I. It was natural just then that the crown should be a popular emblem on the furniture in houses of devoted Royalists, and probably also of Roundheads whose one desire was to escape the vengeance of the rival party. The centre of the top and bottom of the back, and the centre of the ornamental foot-rail are the places where the crown generally appears. On a seal used by Charles II. for his private correspondence may be seen the cherubs supporting a crown—symbolical perhaps of 'Church and State'—exactly as they are to be found on furniture. This seal appears on letters to his daughter, the Countess of Lichfield, as late as 1684. James II., as Duke of York, uses a crown and palm branches—also to be traced on chairs (see Plate LXVIII., 2). When loyal sentiments found cause to be less exuberant, the cherub's head, that stock article in the decorative repertoire of Europe, perhaps took the place of the crown, but the cherubs and crown appear on the silver table of William III. at Windsor. Later on, possibly as late as William III., appears that decoration consisting mainly of convex and concave C-curves opposed to each other, which not only forms the chief feature of the three centre portions of the back, but also takes the place of the turned front legs. These curves, convex and concave, might be said to form an S but for the fact that where their ends meet there is a sharp corner. Any one who is familiar with the beautiful type of Venetian carved and gilt picture or mirror frames of the end of the sixteenth century will recognise the origin of this shape. An almost invariable feature of these mirrors, however much disguised by 'swags' of flowers or other details, is an arrangement of curves, convex and concave, on each

side. These main forms of ornament, crowns, cherubs, cherubs' heads, and curves, diversified by the leaf 'rosette' on legs and uprights, though perhaps the commonest and most characteristic shapes, do not exhaust the possibilities of the chair of the end of the seventeenth century. In Shaw's *Specimens of Ancient Furniture*, Plate XVI., are reproduced three fine examples, which he attributes to the reign of William III. In these appear the leaf rosette, the leaf-carved arms, and the convex and concave curves, but not the cherub's head or the crown. Special features are the strapwork pattern in the centre of the back of one of them, the shell or fan shape in another, and the arrangement of X-shaped and curved leg-rails, with large central finial, in a third. This latter detail is perhaps decidedly of William's time; but when we remember that Charles II. died in 1685, and William began to reign in 1688, it will be natural to conclude that no very great differences are likely to be found between periods so close together. As a general principle, perhaps, it might be safe to say that a chair with turned outer uprights at the back, and all four turned legs, is more likely to be of the date of Charles II., whilst the curving and shaping of the front legs denotes a later chair. Crowns and convex and concave C-curves are not unfrequently found together.

There are various interesting specimens in the Victoria and Albert Museum. To No. 94 (Plate LXVI.1) I have already referred as an apparent transition from the Cromwellian chair to the later style, by reason of its carved front stretcher with rough cherub's head and curves. Also reproduced (Plate LXVI.2) is an ungainly chair, No. 96. The shape is very squat, the back being too low for the arms. The material is walnut wood, and the arms and cross rails are horizontal spirals. The back and seat are in red velvet with a fringe between the bottom of the back and the seat, which do not

meet. The horizontal arms are supported at their ends by figures described in the catalogue as being dressed like ladies of the court of Mary of Modena, who married James II. in 1673. For once, it is perhaps possible to be more exact. Panniers worn over the skirt appear in Hollar's prints of 1640, but panniers and the low-falling collar cut straight across the bosom date, in prints of Hollar and of Sylvester, 1664. Now this straight collar, with the loose sleeves tied at the elbow and continued with lawn, the massive but short side-ringlets of hair, and the large necklace, are found exactly reproduced in a print by Jeaurat, after Lebrun, representing the marriage of Louis XIV. and Maria Theresa in 1660. There appears also an upholstered chair of exactly the same general shape, though without the figures or spiral turning. It has a very deep cushion, which raises the sitter above the low arms. This evidence of a costume and chair in the same print may be regarded as fairly conclusive of the date of this chair, 1660 *circa*. The affectation of some writers for precisely dating undated furniture is merely calculated to amuse.

The first and most elaborate chairs, of the end of the seventeenth century, are those numbered 337 and 338, and four (Nos. 3302-5), lent by Mr. Massy-Mainwaring. These come from old Richmond Palace, and unquestionably show the influence of the designs of Daniel Marot. He was born in 1650, and died about 1700. A Huguenot refugee, he came to England with William III., as his architect, and has left his traces in some of the mirrors and gueridons at Hampton Court. No. 337 has two turned uprights and a broad central piece in the back, carved with a vase of flowers resting on a ledge, with the hanging diapered cloth which appears in French furniture, especially that of Boulle, for which Marot's designs were also used. No. 338 is similar to No. 3305, belonging to Mr. Massy-Mainwaring. It

has five uprights in the back, and a considerable amount of crossing strapwork. All four of his chairs have the 'leaf rosette,' as I have called it above, on the lower end of the uprights: two have it also at the top. One shows the convex and concave curves also mentioned before.

There are reproduced in Plate LXIX.2 two chairs of very similar design and quality to these fine examples in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The first is the arm-chair from Kingsbridge Church referred to before. It has the convex and concave curves on each side of the centre of the back, together with fan-shaped arrangements of conventional leaves, which suggest the more obvious scallop-shell of a few years later, and what I have called the fan pattern of the old oak period. Its legs with gadrooned shapes and X-shaped stretchers render it a fine example in oak of the chair of Louis XIV. influence.

Quite as fine is an example belonging to Mr. Vincent J. Robinson, Parnham, Beaminster. This has also gadroon shapes on its legs, and similar X-shaped stretchers, with finial where they cross in the centre. It is of walnut, and when exhibited at Bethnal Green was dated about 1660. It bears, however, the strongest traces of Marot's design. The front of one of his clock-case designs has such very similar strapwork shapes to those on this fine chair that it must be attributed to his influence, and therefore placed near the end of the century.

Reproductions are here given (Plate LXVIII.) of some of a series of chairs of this period mostly in possession of Mr. E. Hockliffe, The Hall, Uppingham. They give a fair idea of the varieties of shape to be found amongst the ordinary furniture as contrasted with the more grandiose examples from old Richmond Palace, and those finely carved specimens, some of which may be English, in the manner of chairs styled 'Louis XIII. and XIV.' One has a cherub's head winged between

two acanthus, or perhaps palm, leaves at the top of the back. The centrepiece of the back has an oblong of cane in a wooden frame pierced and carved with leafage. There is a space of about one inch between this middle piece and the spiral uprights. There is scroll leafage carved upon the edges of the seat both on the top and the front. The stretcher below the seat shows the cherub and leafage over again, and there is a spiral rail below and behind the stretcher. There is the usual rosette on square parts of legs and uprights, and usual acorn finials. The carving is rough, and the caning moderate in size of mesh.

Another chair has no carving on the centrepiece of the back, but the wood which edges the cane oblong is lightly incised with a lattice pattern, which appears also on the wood of the seat.

A typical crown chair is also illustrated (Plate LXVIII.1), and then we pass on to a typical convex and concave curved chair (Plate LXVIII.3), of which a specimen may be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Very similar in form of arms and legs is the example shown, with fancifully shaped caning. The smallness of the mesh is remarkable. Somewhat recalling the leg-shapes of Mr. Vincent J. Robinson's chair is a walnut specimen (Plate LXIX.3) with semicircular ends to the caning, and a remarkably heavy bulbous cross-rail. This heavy turning is found upon Portuguese tables, and is accompanied in this chair by the species of projecting club-foot with flutes upon it, which by some writers is known as the 'Spanish foot.' That which ends in a volute projecting at the floor, as in the typical convex and concave curved chair of our illustration, is called Flemish. A glance through the whole series reproduced will show considerable varieties, scarcely one foot being quite like another. It would be difficult to classify that of the child's chair in the writer's possession (Plate LXX.1). There is an upper convex

curve and the commencement of a concave, but no projecting volute. It most nearly resembles the foot of the typical crown chair belonging to Mr. E. Hockliffe. Mrs. Morse, in *Furniture of the Olden Time*, shows a very pretty child's chair with spiral turning and a crown. That has a plain rectangular member at the bottom, and so has the charming one of our illustration belonging to the Rev. Canon Watson, of Rockingham Castle (Plate LXX.2).

In Chapter XIII., on chairs of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, will be found a note (p. 191), as to a rare type of circular-backed and seated chair which has been ascribed to the period of Charles II.

Stools and couches follow the same rules of decoration. The stool is upholstered, and a more comfortable piece of furniture than its predecessor of the old oak period, which many people love to describe as a 'coffin stool,' as if to support a coffin was the sole reason of its existence.

Of the couches reproduced in Plate LXXI.1, 2, one from the Victoria and Albert Museum has a movable end which can be set at any angle. On the frame of the seat may be seen the incised lattice or diamond to which I have drawn attention on one of Mr. E. Hockliffe's chairs. The other, belonging to Miss Evans, of Forde Abbey, is rather exceptional. It is covered with embossed and painted leather. There are two folding ends with iron plates, and rods to secure them.[1] The legs and straining rails are painted and gilt. Judging from the turning of its legs and general plainness, the date of this should be quite as early as 1660, to which period it was assigned in the Bethnal Green Exhibition. Mr. F. Litchfield in his *History of Furniture* figures a much more elaborate couch with legs and stretchers in the grandiose style of Louis XIV., which is at Penshurst, Kent. It recalls a

[1] A fine folding couch exists at Knole.

chair of similar style which he illustrates from Hardwick Hall, where are several very important pieces of furniture. Of stools there is no better storehouse than Knole in Kent, where they are found of every variety, both ordinary and cross-legged. Chairs, too, of this earlier kind are there to be seen, and additional interest attaches to them by reason of the portrait by Mytens of James I., representing him as seated upon one of them, which is placed below the picture. This cross-legged furniture is of Italian type. An early example is preserved in Winchester Cathedral, and is said to have been used at the marriage of Mary with Philip of Spain in 1554. It is of clumsy shape; the upper parts of the X-shapes, forming the supports of arms and back, point upwards like the prongs of a pitchfork. At the intersection in front there is a large five-petalled flower, perhaps a Tudor rose. A similar chair in York Minster has a shield at the front of the X, is upholstered with velvet or leather, and is more elegant than the Winchester example.

Queen Anne's State-bedchamber at Hampton Court Palace is another excellent place for the study of stools and settees carved with the varieties of detail mentioned in this chapter. There are eight stools and three settees without backs, displaying crowns supported by cherubs, plain S-curves, arched stretchers of the Portuguese style, and stretchers with convex and concave curves. There are also two gueridons, or stands for large china pots, consisting of convex and concave curves grouped together and finely carved with acanthus leafage.

The close alliance between Charles II. and Louis XIV., during which the former was practically in the pay of France, had for one of its results the importation of the grandiose style of Lebrun and Boulle. That alliance which was to subsidise Charles into a position of independence towards Parliament, and in return to leave Louis a free hand for dealing with the Dutch, could

not be carried through without a French ascendancy in English politics. The French king's instrument was Louise de Querouaille, who soon ingratiated herself with Charles and was created by him Duchess of Portsmouth. She continued in favour from 1670 till the death of the king in 1685. On October 4, 1683, John Evelyn describes her dressing-room: 'But that which engag'd my curiosity was the rich and splendid furniture of this woman's apartment, now twice or thrice pull'd down and rebuilt to satisfie her prodigal and expensive pleasures, while Her Majesty's dos not exceede some gentlemen's ladies in furniture and accommodation. Here I saw the new fabriq of French tapissry, for designe, tendernesse of worke, and incomparable imitation of the best paintings, beyond any thing I had ever beheld. . . . Then for Japan cabinets, screenes, pendule clocks, greate vases of wrought plate, tables, stands, chimney furniture, sconces, branches, braseras, etc., all of massive silver and out of number, besides some of Her Majesty's best paintings.' Again he says on September 10, 1675: 'I was casually shewed the Dutchesse of Portsmouth's splendid appartment at Whitehall, luxuriously furnished, and with ten times the richnesse and glory beyond the Queenes; such massy pieces of plate, whole tables and stands of incredible value.' The first is a most valuable passage, not only for its general description of a fine room of the period, but also on account of certain details which are mentioned. There is evidence here of the arrival of the Japan cabinet in England, and of the making of silver furniture. The few remains of the latter have perhaps fostered an idea that it was always very rare. At any rate there was plenty of it in the Duchess of Portsmouth's bedroom, and it is quite probable that amongst her 'tables' and 'stands' figured the table and pair of gueridons of this date which exist as examples of silver furniture amongst the treasures of the Crown. At

Knole House there is a 'greate vase,' a mirror, and a table, the exact date of which is 1680. There are also two tripods or gueridons of the date 1676. The table, though almost an unique example in itself, gives valuable indication as to the period at which the convex and concave curves were in vogue, just as they are found upon certain of the cane-backed and seated chairs which I have already described. The legs of this table consist solely, in general shape, of these two striking curves. There is much elaborate decoration in repoussé work all over them and the rest of the table, but as it is peculiar to this unique piece and the mirror belonging to it, it need not detain us.

The Windsor table of silver has spiral legs, but its stretcher is of that elongated X-shape with circular central part which is found in various examples of French furniture of the period after that of spiral turning. This stretcher may be compared with that of a cabinet of wood inlaid with metal, which has long been known at Windsor as the William and Mary cabinet. In this case the four legs are terminal-shaped with Ionic capitals, all in the typically massive style characteristic of Lebrun, the great director of Louis XIV. art, and Boulle, the equally famous executant of furniture. There are three other pieces of silver furniture at Windsor to be noticed. A pair of gueridons with gadroon-edged circular table-tops have each a single pilaster support with a large bulbous lower member. This is supported on three legs, each formed of a concave upper and convex lower curve ending in a volute. Between them, for comparison, may be seen a most beautiful little work-table in the finest style of Boulle's work in metal and tortoise-shell. This has a terminal central pillar like the legs of the William and Mary cabinet, while its tripod is identical in general shape with those of the silver gueridons. The differ-

ences of the style of ornamentation are such as naturally follow from the difference of material. The wooden work-table is smooth with flat inlay: the silver gueridons are rough, with repoussé work. These have the monogram of Charles II. upon them, and though there is no proof that they were made for him in England, yet it is possible. It is very likely that they were some of the silver furniture which Evelyn saw in the Duchess of Portsmouth's rooms.

The third piece at Windsor is a table with four caryatid legs upon bulbous, gadrooned feet. The foot-rail is again X-shaped, and the four arms of the X are sharply curved, ending at their junction in volutes which support a rather too realistic pineapple. The top slab is most elaborately engraved with the arms of William III. A large trophy in the centre is supported by the rose, fleur-de-lys, the thistle, and the harp. Each of these pairs of emblems is surmounted with crowns supported by cherubs, that favourite device of the period. Mr. J. H. Pollen in his catalogue of the furniture in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which contains a reproduction of this table, describes it as being 'in the finest French or Dutch-French manner of the period.' In explanation of the double attribution he traces its design to 'Daniel Marot who was much employed in Holland at the Court of William III., and may have executed the table in Holland, or sent his designs to this country.'

It is probable that Louis XIV. possessed a large quantity of this silver furniture, which was melted down to meet the exigencies of a treasury depleted by his wars. The inlaid furniture of Boulle was perhaps its successor, but as late as 1691 de Launay, silversmith to the king, was turning out silver furniture. French influence must therefore be regarded as predominating in furniture of this material. The preponderance of Holland has yet to come. France was

at the acme of her power in 1685.[1] Lord Macaulay remarks that with the Stuart kings England fell in the scale of nations. It is noticeable that before that period was over she began to get rid of her national style of furniture, if so it may be called. With the most debased of that royal line the process was carried furthest, and the change would have been more sweeping still if the impoverished Royalists of the Restoration had had much money to spend on furniture. But while money was poured out like water at Whitehall to the king's favourites, the rents of land in the country had fallen five shillings in the pound. In the great country houses, however, the court fashions were observed. Evelyn, April 17, 1673, says: 'The Countess of Arlington carried us up into her new dressing-roome at Goring House, where was a bed, two glasses, silver jars and vases, cabinets, and other so riche furniture as I had seldom seene; to this excesse of superfluity were we now arrived, and that not onely at Court, but almost universally, even to wantonesse and profusion.' At Penshurst and Hardwick chairs in the grand French style of this period are to be found. A carved and upholstered chair at Hardwick Hall has legs of the terminal shape, with gadroons upon the upper part. The lower part of the leg is fluted. The stretcher consists of two C-curves, each one joining a back leg to a front. The two touch on their convex sides, thus forming an X, and support a finial under the centre of the seat. At Penshurst is a suite comprising couch and chairs upholstered in velvet, and gilt. The legs are not terminal-shaped but have a rectangular section, with flutes and gadroons, and the massive kind of stretcher which I have before described. There is a complete absence of the turned work of the spiral-legged Stuart chair. It is of course impossible without documentary evidence to

[1] The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in this year, very probably brought over silversmiths amongst the Huguenot refugees.

prove that such a suite as this was made in this country. There is no decisive reason why it must have been imported. It is at any rate necessary to recognise that such a style was in use at the period of French ascendancy over England. When our country freed itself from foreign influence and fifty years later achieved a style of its own, the adherence of Chippendale and his contemporaries to French designs was still marked enough.

CHAPTER XI

INIGO JONES, WREN, AND GRINLING GIBBONS

IN the period at which we have arrived the resemblances between the exterior and interior details of a house and those of its furniture are no longer striking. We shall find that to the last—that is, till the commencement of the nineteenth century, when style and art in furniture for a time practically disappeared—there is some connection. It would, however, be unreasonable to suppose that it could be so universal or obvious as it was when the fine Renaissance houses were built. These were finished with their contents, as we have seen, for the most part by the same set of men. Except where panelling was imported from abroad, or foreign workmen were employed at home, the court cupboards, tables, chests, and chairs of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods were thought out and made by the native carpenter and joiner, who was also responsible for the whole woodwork of the house. If division of labour was not unknown, if a joiner and carpenter was differentiated from a mason, division of styles was a thing undreamed of. Except in so far as difference of material necessitated, the shapes of the stone were repeated in the shapes of the wood. The details of the mason are those of the carpenter. Both use the round arch, the steeple, the facet, and the flute. The fact is, they were left to themselves, and they doubtless helped each other to work out the mere indications of 'carving here,' and

'carving there,' upon the 'Surveyor's' perfunctory plan.

Now times have changed. In the first place, we hear of the architect, and his name implies much.[1] He is no longer the mere serving-man of the noble lord or rich merchant who intends to build a house. He imposes his own ideas, to crystallise or perhaps even to discover which he has been at the expense of a journey to Italy. Returning fully laden, it is not likely that he will leave the artisan to any devices but the architect's own. Herein is a first great division of labour, and stone being the chief material of architecture the mason feels the change most. The architect is engrossed in the general lines and exterior appearance of the house. He has time and energy remaining to think about the interior and the woodwork, but scarcely about the furniture. The task of supplying details from superior knowledge to an army of joiners and cabinet-makers is more than he cares to undertake. With neglect of movables comes perhaps contempt. It is not an architect's business to trouble himself with tables and chairs. That is, on the whole, the prevailing idea until Sir W. Chambers (1726-1796), W. Kent, and, above all, Robert Adam (born in 1728, and flourishing most between 1764-1784), come to counteract it. The increase of comfort, and the desire for much and fine furniture by contrast with the scanty times of the early eighteenth century, taught the prudent Scotsman Adam that furniture was worth an architect's attention. And so he finds it not beneath his dignity to assimilate cabinets to carpets and counterpanes, and even to descend to the consideration of a lady's workbag.

No such universality of practice can be ascribed to

[1] Shakespeare only once uses the word 'architect,'—in *Titus Andronicus*, 1593; 'surveyor' appears on six occasions. With Evelyn the word architect is obviously in common use. July 20, 1670: Lord Arlington's 'architect was Mr. Pratt.' John Shute, 'painter and architecte,' 1563, is perhaps the first to whom the name was applied.

INIGO JONES

Inigo Jones, perhaps the first and greatest of British architects. The time had not arrived for filling private houses with expensive furniture designed to fit particular niches of rooms, with which it was entirely in keeping. The late Mr. J. H. Pollen, in the Preface to the Catalogue of the Loan Collection of Furniture at Bethnal Green, says 'that he [Inigo Jones] designed furniture is more than probable.' He goes so far as to suggest that a green and white painted hall-chair at Forde Abbey, with an oval back and family crest in the middle, from which radiate flutings, may be attributed to him. 'It is in four boards, three forming the seat, which has a prolongation behind through which the back passes. The front supporting plank has grotesque masks masterly in design.' Some of the furniture at Brympton, near Yeovil, with a scroll which looks like a loose roll with the ends pulled out, Mr. Pollen also suggests was his. These details, however, are such as may be found on Italian chairs, and, though Sir Christopher Wren handed on a tradition that Inigo Jones was apprenticed to a joiner of St. Paul's Churchyard, nothing definite is known at present.

Inigo Jones was born in 1573 in Smithfield, the son of a clothworker. Little is known of the first thirty years of his life, though he is supposed to have been a proficient painter of landscapes. His merit in this respect may have induced the Earl of Arundel or the Earl of Pembroke to send him to Italy, which he visited at the end of the sixteenth century. On his way home he did some work as a draughtsman for Christian, King of Denmark, and returned to England in 1604 with some reputation as a traveller, but none as yet as an architect. Up to 1610, when he was made Surveyor to Henry, Prince of Wales, he was only known as a man of knowledge and resource, ready invention, and versatile capacity. This caused him to be employed as King's Messenger; but, above all, in the designing of

the scenery and machinery of that famous series of masques, in which King James and his court took part, which poets such as Ben Jonson wrote, and upon which untold sums of money were dissipated. From 1604 to 1613 Inigo Jones was chiefly employed upon this work. In 1612, on the death of Prince Henry, he made his second journey to Italy. He stayed there for about a year, collecting works of art for the Earls of Arundel and Pembroke and Lord Danvers, but having as his main object the further study of painting and architecture. This journey, it may be supposed, put the seal upon his reputation as an architect, for in 1615 he was appointed Surveyor-General of the Works to the King, and in the following years was busy with his designs for the enormous projected palace of Whitehall. The Banqueting House, Whitehall, designed in 1619 and completed in 1622, is all that remains and was completed of the splendid scheme. Here is no example of Renaissance classical ornament clapped on to a building whose main lines are still Gothic in shape, but a completely ordered design in the Palladian style. It is to be noted that, though far less classically complete, some of the houses mentioned in the earlier chapter on the Renaissance house were actually built after the Banqueting Hall. Apethorpe dates from 1623, and Stibbington and Lilford, not previously named, were built in 1625 and 1635 respectively. Inigo Jones himself completed the Inner Court of Kirby (1572-75) in 1635. In 1635 he was busy with the Queen's House at Greenwich, and in 1647 to 1649 he completed Wilton, with its celebrated double-cube room. He died in 1652.

If we wish to find furniture with the same kind of general form and details as those of Inigo Jones's exterior and interior style we must turn to Italy, whence he obtained his inspiration. Florentine cabinets with miniature palace façades can alone be compared with

his elaborate chimneypieces and doorways. His chimneypieces in marble, stone, or oak have interrupted or swan-necked pediments, supported by groups of classical pillars. His brackets are carved with the acanthus, a detail which is common enough on English cabinets and beds.

He uses cartouche shapes in the centre of broken pediments or under the mantelshelf. The large upper panel of the chimneypiece is sometimes diversified by jutting or 'returning' angles at the top, and supported by scrolls on the outside, at the bottom, in the manner of a merely ornamental buttress. The hanging bell-flower appears sometimes in his carvings, and has been repeated by furniture designers over and over again. Terminal shapes and busts are found very often on each side of the fireplace, not so often perhaps above. His chimneypieces generally have two, occasionally three, tiers, and resemble his outside porches. Italian workmen were brought over to carve them and other work, but amongst his many pupils one at least, Nicholas Stone, was a native, and famous as the carver of the porch of St. Mary's at Oxford. This porch is worth considering by the student of furniture. First, above the round arch of the doorway are to be seen the great rolling curves of the pediment, a shape which in a lighter form was used most freely in the eighteenth-century bookcases and cupboards and cabinets. Secondly, the niche which fills the centre of the pediment, and contains the statue of the Virgin and Child, has a scallop-shell domed top, copied no doubt from the niches of such Italian sculptors as Sansovino.[1] This we find at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century is a favourite form not only for outside porches but also for those elaborate open or closed corner cupboards, with shelves for china,

[1] For ultimate sources of this shape, the S-curve, rosette, acanthus, etc., see such works as Mr. Percy Gardner's *Sculptured Tombs of Hellas.*

which were called buffets or 'beaufaits,' and were the precursors of the sideboard. On a smaller scale it will be found to grace the tops of chairs, the upper ends of chair legs, and the centre of the front of the seat in chairs as late as those of the early mahogany period. Lastly, we are again reminded of a chair shape by the great twisted columns at the sides of the porch. It will be easy to conclude—even if Raphael's cartoons and Italian chairs, with spiral-turned shapes, did not exist to prove it—that this spiral turning which we associate with the reign of Charles II. is of Italian origin. The influence of Inigo Jones on a great carver who, as we shall see, did make furniture, seems apparent if we consider the panelling of the double-cube room at Wilton, which was made to receive the portraits by Vandyke. The huge hanging masses of fruit and flowers slung from riband bows, and with drapery shapes attached, most certainly suggest the boldly relieved bird and fruit and flower carvings of Grinling Gibbons. Still more do the cherubs' heads in cartouches, or between swags, remind us of the exquisite handiwork of Evelyn's *protégé*.

As regards the shape and size of panels, Inigo Jones introduced a change. We no longer find small and numerous panels all of the same shape, but a larger and more varied design. A doorway by him may or may not have a pediment of the same character as the chimneypieces. There is often a large ovolo or cushion moulding below the cornice, sometimes plain, but often highly carved. The panelling which the doorway frames with its double doors is generally in three tiers. Either there is a small panel at the top and two long upright ones below, or else there is a long upright above and below, with a square panel in the centre. The edgings of them have changed from the early half-moulded, half-chamfered fashion, and are now a regular classical ovolo or an ogee.

The same treatment, with mouldings perhaps even heavier still, is found in the interiors of Sir Christopher Wren. That great man must be mentioned here as the employer of the incomparable carver, Grinling Gibbons, to whose decorative genius the architect was so much indebted. Grinling Gibbons is the first of whom we can definitely say that such and such a piece of interior work was by his hand. The charming story of his discovery by John Evelyn is told in the latter's diary, under date of January 18, 1671. A bare month later he records that there dined with him 'Mr. Surveyor Dr. Christopher Wren, and Mr. Pepys, Cleark of the Acts, two extraordinary ingenious and knowing persons, and other friends.' He carried them to see the piece of carving by Gibbons which he had recommended to the king, and secured Wren's faithful promise to employ Gibbons.

Grinling Gibbons or Gibbon was born in 1648 at Rotterdam, and came, fortunately for us, to England in 1667, the year after the great fire of London. In Horace Walpole's time there was some doubt as to his origin. 'An original genius, a citizen of Nature,' he says, 'consequently it is indifferent where she produced him. . . . There is no instance of a man before Gibbons who gave to wood the loose and airy lightness of flowers, and chained together the various productions of the elements with a free disorder natural to each species.' This rather stilted panegyric, by which Walpole means that birds and flowers and fishes and fruits all find a place, with the human figure, in Gibbons's carving, is no more than his due. The wonderfully executed mirror-frame in the Victoria and Albert Museum (No. 1833) shows his astonishing power of intricate combination (Plate LXXII.). Here are the vine-leaf and the grape, the wheat-ear and the hop-blossom, the pea-pod and the poppy-head, the sunflower, the guelder-rose, and other blooms and fruits and foliage too numerous

to mention. The lower side of the frame shows a crab and sea-shells of the most complicated shapes, as if they were chosen for their difficulty of execution. But the carver's hand has gained an easy triumph over all. In this frame Gibbons has shown more technical skill than artistic breadth of treatment. The little table (Plate LXXIV.), belonging to Mr. Seymour Lucas, R.A., shows him at his best. The same admirable technical capacity is there—in fact, more still is shown in the masterly treatment of the cherubs' heads. There is besides a finer sense of breadth and proportion and grace of line, which in the mirror has been somewhat frittered away. Amongst the decorations of St. Paul's Cathedral, which are proof that Sir Christopher Wren kept his promise to Evelyn, there is a string-course by Gibbons of running scroll-work. It has for basis those convex and concave curves which, apart from the superadded fruits and draperies, form the main lines of the legs of Mr. Seymour Lucas's table, though in this case the curves are flattened. This familiar decorative motive is found, as we have seen, again and again upon the chairs of the end of the seventeenth and commencement of the eighteenth centuries. As a rule, with all his naturalism, Gibbons has a very sane underlying groundwork of well-balanced constructive lines. Such free, nervous carving, in which the sharp tool does without the aid of much after-smoothing, was best executed in soft wood, and lime was the favourite species which he employed. Gibbons had, of course, many assistants to help him in his ecclesiastical work, for of the city churches built by Act of Parliament in 1708 Gibbons is said to have had to do with most; but his own handiwork is best seen in mirror-frames, wall-panels, chimneypieces, and over communion tables in churches. St. James's, Piccadilly, is a case in point. Of that Evelyn says, 'there was no altar anywhere in England, nor has there been any abroad, more hand-

somely adorned.' Windsor extorts the diarist's greatest praise. On June 16, 1683, he went thither and writes: 'I liked the contrivance of the unseene organ behind the altar, nor less the stupendous, and beyond all description the incomparable carving of our Gibbons, who is, without controversie, the greatest master both for invention and rarenesse of worke, that the world ever had in any age.'[1]

Allowance must be made for the partiality of a man who had so much to do with the career of Gibbons, but the reference to his inventiveness must afford no doubt that Sir Christopher Wren left him a very free hand. It is permissible to point out that in some cases the very great relief and naturalism of Gibbons's work, placed for safety rather high on a wall which has somewhat plain panelling below, is apt to give a suggestion of top-heaviness to a room. This will be apparent to any one who considers the doorway leading into the Rubens Room from the State Ante-Room at Windsor. The clusters of fish and dead game project a little too insistently from the wall, the heavy and severely plain panelling of which forms a sufficiently striking contrast to the exuberant upper carving. No man, however, is always at his best, and there is no question that, whatever continental masters inspired Gibbons, there was never before in England such carving as his. In the library of Trinity College, Cambridge, designed by Wren, may be seen profuse examples of Gibbons's work. In the highest end panel of many of the projecting bookshelves are carvings one and a half feet across, enclosing the arms of the donors. One at least of these is said to be carved entirely out of one piece of lime-wood—an instance of Oriental intricacy. The rest are pinned, as is usually the case, to keep the various parts intact. The oak shelves are reddish-brown, stained, but not polished. The lime has its natural light colour.

[1] See Appendix, Note iv.

In striking contrast to Gibbons's mirror is the straight-lined one reproduced in Plate LXXIII. 1. This is probably English and of his period, or perhaps earlier. Its design has artistic merit, but the execution is not to be compared with that of Grinling Gibbons. Evelyn has a reference to a clock case which Gibbons decorated for Mr. Bohun at Lea, Kent, 'whose whole house,' says the diarist, 'is a cabinet of elegancies, especially Indian; in the hall are contrivances of Japan skreens instead of wainscot, and there is an excellent pendule clock inclosed in the curious flower-work of Mr. Gibbons in the middle of the vestibule. The landskips of the skreens represent the manner of living and country of the Chinese; but above all, his lady's cabinet is adorn'd on the fret, ceiling and chimney piece with Mr. Gibbons's best carving,' July 30, 1682. This entry is interesting from various points of view. It shows us Gibbons as a furniture decorator, and it makes reference to that 'Chinese craze' which was to obtain, a little later, so much support from William the Third's queen. The use of Japan screens (were they of textile fabrics or lacquer?) anticipates by two hundred years the experiments of to-day in original furnishing.

Gibbons died in 1720, just before the period of mahogany furniture is said to have commenced. That of Queen Anne was a somewhat plain and barren epoch. It would seem that the handsome and heavy panelling was considered almost sufficient in itself to furnish a room. In Gibbons's case the carving, which might have graced cabinets and chairs instead of being fixed to the wall, did much to make an apartment beautiful and stately. Comfort, however, was not to be much considered for another generation, when at length the influence of Gibbons's genius and example was to be felt in the beautiful carving of every kind of movable furniture. A nobleman's house of his own time, and probably decorated by Gibbons himself, is described

by J. T. Smith (*Nollekens and his Times*, vol. i. p. 27, 1829). This was the Duke of Monmouth's in Soho Square, then about to be destroyed. 'Of the eight rooms on the ground floor the principal one was a dining-room, . . . the carved and gilt panels of which had contained whole-length pictures. . . . The staircase was of oak. . . . and the landing-places were tesselated with woods of light and dark colour similar to those now remaining on the staircase of Lord Russell's house . . . and in several rooms of the British Museum. As we ascended, I remember Mr. Nollekens noticing the busts of Seneca, Caracalla, Trajan, Adrian, and several others upon ornamental brackets. The principal room on the ground floor . . . was lined with blue satin, superbly decorated with pheasants and other birds in gold. The chimneypiece was richly ornamented with fruit and foliage, similar to the carvings which surround the altar of St. James's Church, Piccadilly. . . . In the centre over this chimneypiece within a wreath of oak leaves was a circular recess which evidently had been designed for the reception of a bust. The beads of the panels of the brown window-shutters, which were very lofty, were gilt; and the piers between the windows, from stains upon the silk, had probably been fitted with looking-glasses.'

The Duke of Buckingham's glass factory, established in 1673 at Lambeth, must have led to a great demand for mirror glass, which had not before been made in England. In an inventory of Corfe Castle taken in 1660 there is not a mirror mentioned. After 1673 they were frequent, and bordered sometimes with blue glass, and sometimes painted with flowers, etc., in the Venetian manner, which was introduced by the Venetian workmen who made the glass. Mr. J. H. Pollen in *Ancient and Modern Furniture and Woodwork in the South Kensington Museum* (now the Victoria and Albert Museum), introduction, p. 138, mentions that Sir Samuel Mor-

land built a fine room at Vauxhall in 1667, the inside all of looking-glass; whilst the house of Nell Gwynne in Pall Mall had the back room on the ground floor entirely lined with looking-glass, as was said to have been the ceiling also.[1] Such rooms as these were, however, but instances of exceptional luxury. For the country gentleman who witnessed the Revolution, as described by Macaulay, they did not exist. 'He troubled himself little about decorating his abode, and if he attempted decoration, seldom produced anything but deformity.' This may be set down as a somewhat sweeping statement, not at any rate true for us who, fifty years and more after Macaulay wrote, have learned to appreciate the quiet artistic merits of even the most provincial chairs and tables. Considering that in Charles II.'s reign there was not a town besides London of thirty thousand people, and only four of ten thousand, no great magnificence was to be expected. In 1654 Bath is described by Evelyn as, though built of stone, a town of 'streetes narrow, uneven, and unpleasant,' and Macaulay quotes a writer who says of it, sixty years after the Revolution, that in his younger days visitors slept in rooms hardly as good as the garrets which he lived to see occupied by his footmen. The floors of the rooms were uncarpeted, and were coloured brown with a wash made of soot and small beer in order to hide the dirt. That no wainscots were painted, and no chimneypieces were of marble, is merely a proof that in fashions the city was behind London, not that there might not have been artistic woodwork. But the writer adds that the best apartments were hung with coarse woollen stuff, and were furnished with rush-bottomed chairs. We need not, therefore, be surprised to find a considerable plainness in the ordinary furniture and decoration of the Restoration and some time

[1] See Appendix, Note v.

after, unless when we are considering London, the great country houses, or the rooms of Charles II.'s mistresses.

Kensington Palace and Hampton Court Palace are two of the most convenient instances of the combined efforts of Sir Christopher Wren and Grinling Gibbons. The same moulding is to be found in the orangery at Kensington as in many of the palace rooms. One of the great differences between the earlier seventeenth century details and those of Wren lies in his use of 'bolection mouldings'—mouldings, that is, which project beyond the stile upon which they are placed. Among the specimens in Plate x., a rough sketch will be found to explain the change. The typical seventeenth-century moulding does not project in front of the stile. Wren's panels are raised and splayed, that is, they have a central parallelogram surrounded by a bevelled edge, like that of a plate-glass mirror, but with the addition of a step down from the parallelogram to the bevel. The ovolo and the ogee, with fillets, are used to compose the mouldings. It is interesting to compare Wren's rooms, decorated by Gibbons, with those of the vastly inferior Kent. Queen Caroline's drawing-room by the latter has much plainer panelling, the stile and the panel being very much on the same level, and edged with the same moulding, a round and a fillet. The inferiority of Kent is apparent in this and in his style of overdoor arrangement. In the King's Gallery, 1691-1696, the overdoor of Wren and Gibbons is beautiful. The mouldings are carved with egg and dart and leafage, and the general outline is well composed. If there is a fault, it lies in the extreme elaboration of the high-placed cornice of the room as compared with the less intricacy of the door-tops. The turn-down of the acanthus-leaves of the cornice is in full relief. Kent's style of doorway is an upright parallelogram, with a narrow one crossing it like the

top of a T,—a very jejune affair in comparison with those of his predecessors.

Turned balusters for staircases with Wren are more complicated than those of a previous period, if we leave the spiral turning out of account. On the queen's staircase examples are to be seen, which if compared with the bulbous legs of the chair belonging to Mr. E. Hockliffe (Plate LXIX.3) will give a pretty conclusive idea of its date. In the presence-chamber is a chimneypiece by Gibbons, with hanging draperies and cherubs in the style of the table illustrated, belonging to Mr. Seymour Lucas, R.A. This is a convenient instance for observing the wonderful technique of Gibbons; the draperies are absolutely hollow. Standing beneath, it is possible to look up into and through their folds. Also, where the effects of time have dealt unkindly with the flower-work, may be noticed his system of pinning outlying pieces, a method often necessary in such intricate overlay of leafage, flowers, and fruit.

Practically the same panel mouldings, with slight variations, will be found in Wren's and Gibbons's work at Hampton Court Palace. In the guard-chamber, on the doors, one round and fillet is omitted, but in the audience-chamber the Kensington Palace moulding will be found. The doorways of the queen's gallery have the same shape as that described in the king's gallery at Kensington.

Many mirrors are here to be seen. In the king's first presence-chamber are three gilt ones between the windows, with tops recalling the tops of chairs. In the audience-chamber the mirrors are entirely of glass, which is cut with a flower pattern on the borders. Outside of these is a flat frame of glass, with scalloped edges. In the king's bedroom is another entirely of glass, with a blue border and William's monogram. The writing-closet has a gilt mirror surmounted by an

eagle, and strap-work on its side pilasters in the style of Marot. In the queen's gallery are six curious mirrors, rectangular in shape, in very thin black frames with modern oak edgings. They are painted with flower-trails in red, green, yellow, and white.

The description given above of the Duke of Monmouth's house in Soho Square may be paralleled by the following account of a country seat, Woodcote, near Epsom, belonging to Lord Baltimore, which was advertised 'To be sold by Mr. Langford and Son at their House in the Great Piazza, Covent Garden,' in the *London Chronicle*, June 23-26, 1764. 'A most noble, elegant, and complete Mansion House and Chapel, fitted up with enriched ceilings, mahogany floors, magnificent marble chimneypieces in Basso and Alto Relievo, by Fiamingo and others; carvings by Gibbons; paintings by Rubens and Verrio; fine marble figures and vases and other embellishments introduced and adapted with the greatest skill and judgment, and the whole finished in the most rich and superb taste.' The wording of this announcement prepares us for the literary style of the furniture pattern-books of Chippendale and his successors, which were all pitched in the same grandiose key. The item of mahogany floors is an interesting one, and the fact that the surname of Gibbons, without his distinctive prefix, appears in capital letters along with those of Rubens and Verrio, shows that his fame in 1764 was still at its zenith.

CHAPTER XII

SMOOTH-SURFACED FURNITURE OF THE LATE SEVENTEENTH AND EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

AS we have arrived at a period when the importation of foreign woods gave a great impetus to the practice of gluing them over common oak or deal, it is perhaps advisable to notice the difference of meaning between the terms 'inlay,' 'marquetry,' and 'veneering.' The derivations of the latter words do not help us much, 'marquetry' merely signifying diversification with marks, and 'veneer' coming through French from the old German *furniren*, to furnish. All three refer to processes which are very similar, as in each case woods of various kinds cut into thin slices are glued on to or into a thicker and cheaper groundwork. The term 'inlay' may be used when a pattern consisting of woods of various colours and grains is let into a groundwork which is visible as a field for the pattern when the work is complete. 'Marquetry' is perhaps better applied to that kind of work which consists in covering an underlying ground entirely with thin slices of other woods, often less than a thirty-second of an inch in thickness, so that none of the base is visible as a field. Under this heading would come all the elaborate pictures in wood, either of figure subjects or architecture, which were made in Spain and Italy, and later by Roentgen and others in France. By 'veneering' is meant the process of covering a substructure of

some common wood, such as oak or pine, with a thin coat of a single other wood, such as walnut or mahogany, so as to convey the impression that the whole object is made of that wood.

In many cases, although but one wood is used to cover the surface, the sheets cut from one log are so placed in relation to each other as to make patterns out of the grain. It is obvious that the grain of very thin sheets cut from the same piece of wood would be very similar. By taking two of these and placing the first one way, and the second the other, as the pages of an open book, beautiful effects of opposition of grain are to be obtained. This process, however, was not common, except perhaps in the case of walnut-veneered furniture, until the mahogany period, which may be placed after 1720. Large pieces of this fine-grained wood could be treated in this manner to advantage, as it will take a polish infinitely superior to that of the coarser-grained woods. The distinctions of 'inlay' and 'marquetry' are not very strictly kept. The terms have a tendency to be used rather promiscuously, according to the amount of pattern in proportion to ground. Where very little ground shows, it is the practice to speak of marquetry; where the ground predominates, we use the term inlay. The old oak furniture was cut into nearly one-eighth of an inch, that it might hold fast its inlaid decoration, and this, of course, is essentially different from laying *on to* a substructure a pattern made of thin pieces of different coloured woods, to which the words marquetry and veneer are more strictly applicable.

It is reasonable to suppose that the first efforts of inlayers (or *on*layers) were humble, and to expect simple geometrical shapes easy of cutting and manipulation, before complicated curves and figures. Upon old oak chests and chairs, as we have seen, triangles and oblongs and rhomboidal shapes are frequent, and the

flower and leaf designs growing out of a vase are perhaps the latest and highest result. In the period at which we have arrived we find two styles in use—geometrical, and what may be called freehand. A good example of the first in the Victoria and Albert Museum is the table (No. 4620) of pine inlaid with *lignum vitæ* and other woods. This (Plate LIII.2) is a heavy object about four feet long only, upon massive spiral legs, joined by curved stretchers forming a species of X shape. To quote some of Mr. J. H. Pollen's description: 'The top is of marquetry . . . formed of slices or sections of laurel, arbutus, and other rare native woods, showing the concentric circles of the grain. The centre is a panel with a border of ebony and ivory; circles with large ebony and ivory stars fill this panel, and stars are placed on the four corners of the table. . . . Rosewood, box, walnut, and holly are also employed in the inlaying. Probably a piece of Tonbridge work of the last [eighteenth] century, before mahogany had been introduced into the manufacture of furniture by Chippendale and other contemporary makers.'

Not much is known about the earlier productions of Tunbridge, which is still a centre for the manufacture of inlaid wooden objects. It may be gathered from an article upon the subject in the *Sussex Advertiser*, quoted in Pelton's *Guide to Tunbridge Wells*, that the industry can be traced back in some form or other to 1685, 'when, however, only plain articles were manufactured. Later it became usual to burn figures, such as shells, into the wood before varnishing. Next came the painting of flowers.' Later, about 1830, came the peculiar mosaic work which is still practised, either for expensive picture mosaics of which only one is made, or for wholesale production by means of patterns cut thin — as a cucumber is sliced — from variously shaped and coloured sticks of wood put together and glued beforehand. It is quite probable

that this process was employed in earlier times, and for the purposes of geometrical ornaments, such as stars and chequers in tables, like that described above. More elaborate inlaid work of birds and figures must be regarded as of French or Dutch origin, in default of any evidence that such ornament was made at Tunbridge.

Most typical objects of furniture to which inlay or marquetry was often applied are chests of drawers and tall clocks. On both, the custom of confining the decoration to 'reserves' may be noticed. In a chest of drawers there may be two reserves on each long drawer. These reserved shapes may be described as 'ovals with flat sides,' or 'oblongs with round ends,' and contain a close-set intricate pattern. Sometimes the ground of the reserves is of light wood, and the inlay, perhaps bold acanthus-leaf scrolls following the contour of the reserves, is of various darker woods. This produces a striking result, but is artistically inferior to similar chests of drawers in which the reserves are of dark wood and the inlay light. In this case the line of demarcation between the reserves and the surrounding walnut of which these chests of drawers are made is not so sudden. Though quieter to the eye, the last arrangement seems more in keeping with the true principles of inlay, which should not be allowed to make too bold a bid for notice.

In the Victoria and Albert Museum is a very fine specimen of this class of furniture. No. 153 is a chest of drawers of oak veneered with walnut and inlaid with sycamore patterns of leafage in reserves. There are four large drawers in the front, and drop handles. It is noticeable that all the patterns are varied in size and detail—a fact which, of course, added largely to the expense of making, and also to the artistic effect. The sides are plain, but the top has an oval-shaped band in the centre, enclosing a circular one, which holds a

rosette. The inlay of these bands is an oak-leaf pattern. There are also four scroll corner ornaments like the ornaments of the front. Occasionally these chests of drawers are found raised upon a lower part containing drawers and based upon cabriole legs, as is so often the case with the plainer furniture of the early eighteenth century.

There is no doubt that to the Dutch are largely owing the materials and the style of this freehand inlay, especially wherever the tulip flower enters into the composition. On the other hand, it is the custom of some to claim a certain seaweed or moss pattern as an English motive. This may be seen upon one of the long 'grandfather' clocks (Nos. 225, 331, 4618) in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Of these, No. 4618, with dial signed by 'Henry Poisson, London,' and very prettily inlaid all over, is perhaps the best. No. 225 has no dial, and its inlay consists of griffins with strap- and scroll-work. No. 331 has the spiral columns, and is by 'Mansell Bennett at Charing Cross,' and shows the Dutch tulip motive and birds in compartments. All have a circle or oval to show the pendulum, and in some cases a piece of bull's-eye glass was let in to distort the moving shape.

By the kindness of Mr. D. A. F. Wetherfield, of 8 Lansdowne Place, Blackheath, I am able to illustrate some of his beautiful series of long clocks of this period. They serve at once to show the elegance of the early slender shapes and to afford examples of veneer and inlay. The first (Plate LXXVI.1), with straight top, is by Thomas Tompion, 'Father of English clock-making,' who was buried in Westminster Abbey in 1713. It has a plain burr walnut case, and dates about 1680. Spiral turning is a great feature on the pillars of the faces on these clocks. The second (Plate LXXVI.2), with brass ball finials, is by Edward East, and shows the 'reserve' system of inlay, but not in the entirely simple

form before described. The large tulip shows the Dutch *provenance* of the inlaid pattern. It is also of about 1680. The third (Plate LXXVI.3) is by Joseph Knibb, dates about 1690, and is veneered with laburnum and olive wood. The very pretty pediment with a central vase is a great advance on the plainer tops of the first two. More elegant still is the last (Plate LXXVI.4) by Christopher Gould, and dating about 1700. The pediment of this cannot fail to remind us, with its little cherubs' heads set close together, of Mr. Seymour Lucas's Grinling Gibbons table, where the same motive is so admirably carved. In fact, the top of this clock, which is finely cut, might be the work of Gibbons or of one of his pupils.

Three fine specimens of smooth-surfaced furniture, all dating from the very end of the seventeenth century, remain to be noticed. Earliest, perhaps, if its spiral-turned stand is to be a guide, is the cabinet belonging to Mrs. Edmund McClure (Plate LXXVII.1). The outside doors of this are veneered with a border of pollard oak, very much marked in grain, the centre with hexagonal pieces of thorn acacia. The inside of the doors is also veneered with squares of pollard oak enclosed by a border of alternate dark and light squares of rosewood and sycamore, outside of which is an edging of walnut. Eleven drawers within have faces of burr walnut with an edging of sycamore. The moulding dividing the drawers (which we shall see later on in this chapter is indicative of the period at which this cabinet was made) is of English walnut. The cornice at the top is of pear-wood at the sides and walnut in front. The drawers at the top, below the cornice, are of burr walnut. The stand is of oak. It is said that this kind of cabinet was made when the heirs to some country seat came of age, and a sample of every kind of wood then growing on the estate was used in the making. For this tradition, and the particulars of the woods employed,

I am indebted to the catalogue of the Bethnal Green Exhibition, where the cabinet was exhibited in 1896.

At the Victoria and Albert Museum (No. 157) is a finely inlaid cabinet or chest of drawers and cupboard (Plate LXXVIII.). The cupboard encloses shelves only. A striking feature of the general shape is the hollow plinth on which it rests, and which itself contains a drawer. Upon the three lower drawers the 'reserve' style of inlaying is well exemplified. The carcase of this cabinet is of oak veneered chiefly with walnut. The cupboard panels are inlaid with a remarkable design, the upper part of which represents figures ending in terminal shapes and supporting contorted draperies which form a canopy, and disclose a full-length female figure in an oval medallion. Below there is a great deal of scroll- and strap-work, with shells and vases of flowers. A good amount of pear-wood and ebony is used in this design, which is of unquestionably French inspiration. There is to be seen, in fact, amongst the designs of J. Bérain, whose patterns were used by Boulle in his tortoiseshell and brass inlaid furniture, the very same motive of terminal figures lifting the draperies of a canopy which reveals a standing female figure. It is for a chimneypiece. If the general lines of this cupboard and chest of drawers were a little less severe and heavy-looking, its appearance would have been improved. It is not quite easy to say wherein the defect lies, but perhaps it may be found in a certain incongruity of feeling caused by the application of such fantastic designs as those of Bérain to a piece of furniture made up of so many uncompromising vertical and horizontal straight lines. The severest and straightest of Boulle's cabinets are less rectilinear than this example, and the very salient and striking curves of ormolu and brass work help more to mitigate them, than is effected by the comparatively inconspicuous inlaid work of the piece before us.

In the cabinet upon heavy spiral legs belonging to Mr. R. W. Partridge, of St. James's Street (Plate LXXVII.2), we are not so much impressed by a contrast between small curved inlay and straight general lines. The reason of this lies, I think, first in the fact that the spiral-turned frame below makes, in itself, sufficient contrast to the straight vertical lines above. Secondly, the eye is so irresistibly attracted by the large size of the inlaid panels as scarcely to notice how rigid is the shape which includes them.

These two pieces of furniture are fine examples of the inlaid cabinets of the period 1680-1700, and are exactly suited to mate with the long clocks. It is curious to notice how with these the long pendulum has dictated a slenderness of shape which is not a characteristic of the cabinets.

When once our ancestors had discovered the advantages of turning the chest with a lid into a chest of drawers—which, as we have seen from examples partaking of the nature of both, was a tentative process—they carried on the system until they evolved furniture of a considerable size. The low chest of drawers might suffice for the wants of a presumably simpler age, as far as household goods and linen were concerned, but it was destined to grow taller. In time, perhaps, men forgot that the chest, its progenitor, had been used as a table and a seat. Then they elevated the chest upon a low 'frame' or stand, and by that means made it more important in appearance. At the period which we have reached that frame itself contained a single tier of drawers, and had some pretensions to shapeliness. In this state its general appearance was better than when later it was recognised that turned legs are a merely useless adornment. The last step was to do away with the open space occupied by the legs, and fill it up with drawers. Thus we arrive at the monumental 'tall-boy'

of the mahogany period, with its pretty splayed edges and fretted decorations.

This, however, is to anticipate. The chests of drawers we have to deal with at present are of walnut veneer or of oak, and for the most part of a type which does not allow of great varieties. The upper part has a flat front and contains very often six drawers, arranged in four tiers. The upper tier has three drawers, the centre one of which, with an oblong front, is flanked by two square-fronted ones. The other three tiers contain each one long drawer. The handles of these are likely to be of the pear-shaped drop species, of brass, and there are key-plates pierced and shaped to set off the brown veneer. There is a very light cornice, chiefly of ogee moulding. Similar light mouldings, but turned the other way, that is with the most projecting member the lowest, form a plinth for the upper part resting on the lower. This contains three drawers in one tier. The centre is again an oblong, but for variety the two outer square ones are deeper. They fit into a shaped frame which rests upon six legs, four being in front. The centre drawer being shallower, the open space between the two centre legs is cut into a rounded arch which rises higher than two similar arches between the outside leg spaces. Thus we have a three-arched front supported on four legs. Between the front outer legs and the back legs there is either a plain, rounded arch or a double one unsupported in the centre. The legs are turned with a large acorn-shaped member, and rest on bulbous feet. A flat, plank-shaped rail joins the six legs. That between the two back legs runs straight. Those at the sides and front are curved, and recall, horizontally, the arch shapes above.

Occasionally the two smaller arches under the front assume the ogival shape—that is, are formed of a concave and convex curve on each side, which curves meet at a sharp point in the centre of the arch. This original

shape is again found in the plank rails or stretchers between the legs, but of course in the horizontal plane.

There is not much doubt that the two parts of these early high chests of drawers have come to be separated and regarded as two pieces of furniture. The lower part is found to form an admirable dressing-table, and indeed the difference between the dressing-table proper and the lower part or frame of a tall chest of drawers is slight enough. If there are six legs, strong leg-rails, and but one tier of drawers, the object is probably the lower part of a tall-boy. If the leg-rails are absent, the legs but four in number, and the tiers of drawers increased to two, then the piece is a dressing-table. The chief difference between the two is that in the dressing-table the legs are nearly always of a somewhat slender cabriole type with pad feet.

Certain fashions of moulding or beading the furniture of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries give us some clue to approximate dates.

1. The chests of drawers or tables earliest made in these periods succeed those with raised and splayed centres for their panels, many heavy mouldings arranged in geometrical shapes, and applied half-pendants, pilasters, diamond prisms, and round or oval bosses, which were made towards the end of the carved oak period. Very generally they have a single plain bead upon the framework which surrounds the drawers. This form may be seen in the half-opened interior of the elaborately veneered cabinet upon a stand with spiral-turned legs belonging to Mrs. Edmund McClure (Plate LXXVII. 1).

2. It is probable that next in date are those walnut-veneered or oak tables and chests of drawers with a double bead upon the frame which contains the drawers, and not upon the drawers themselves (Plate LXXX. 1). This is to be well observed on the tall example with six octagonal legs belonging to Messrs. Waring.

3. After this we find a single bead upon the drawers

themselves, no longer on the frame. This is the case upon the Welsh dresser illustrated (Plate XLIII.2) and upon much of the later eighteenth-century furniture. In all these three cases we are dealing with a bead of segmental section projecting beyond its groundwork.

4. The last stage shows us a drawer with an edge moulded but not projecting. The front of the drawer thus moulded is made to overlap the framework so that the cracks between the drawers and the frame are invisible. This arrangement is found on the knee-hole table illustrated (Plate LXXIX.2).

Chests of drawers of the first type are generally, perhaps, of plain walnut veneered, or oak. In those of the second class, with the double bead on the frame, there is often to be found a special type of inlaid border known as the 'herring bone.' An example of this before me is rather less than half an inch wide, and is formed of two parallel strips of light wood difficult to identify, but possibly light-coloured oak or sycamore. These strips have been so cut that the grain, instead of running along the length of the wood, shows in short lines crossing diagonally. By opposing the two strips, the end of each line of grain in one meets the end of each line in the other. Allowing for the irregularities of the grain, we then get a succession of V or arrow heads, which produce in wood the effect of an embroideress's herring-bone stitch. A table I have seen thus fitted has its drawers and carcase of pine veneered with walnut, and cabriole legs of solid walnut. It has drop handles across rather plain brass plates. In the same house is another table which belongs to the third style mentioned. It has a single bead on the drawer, no longer on the frame. The handles are of the same type as those on the other, but have made an advance in the ornamental open-work of their plates. This table is of walnut veneer, and the fronts of the drawers are of pine. For inlay there is a quarter-inch banding

of light wood with diagonal grain—the herring-bone, in fact, without its other half. This and the more elaborate handles are indications that the table is rather later in date than the first, Georgian, perhaps, rather than Queen Anne. Also belonging to the third style —with a single bead on the drawer—and in the same house, is the lower part of a tall-boy—many of which have been made, as this has been, to serve as tables—constructed of solid oak. In this case the frame round the drawers is banded with oak; the grain is not diagonal, but goes straight across as is the case with the tulip or satin-wood cross banding of the Sheraton and Heppelwhite styles.

An early example of the fourth style in which the drawers are moulded without any projection is afforded by a tall chest of drawers on short cabriole legs. This is of solid oak, and the drawers have heavy oak fronts, the rest being of pine. This construction may be set down as illogical, since it makes the drawers as weighty as possible in front.

It is quite possible to find furniture of the period to which all the first three classes belong without any bead at all either on the drawer or on the frame. This is the case with an elm table in the writer's possession. Its inferiority in style to that of the fourth class with overlapping moulding is sufficiently obvious when one observes the cracks between drawers and frame. This method of the fourth class is not of a late date in the eighteenth century. I find it on an oak cabriole leg table and upon a very well-made mahogany bureau in my possession. Its merits lie in the fact that as it is not a projection the same shape can be used to edge the table top as is found on the drawer below, and so produce a certain sense of completeness in the design. The same is the case with the bureau. The edges of its slanting top, the drawers and the top of the plinth, are all finished off in the same manner.

These may appear to be but trivial points, but it must be remembered that we are dealing just now with perhaps the plainest period of English furniture, when the incised carving of oak had died out, together with the elaborate inlay of Charles II. and William III.'s Dutch style. Mahogany was coming in, and as yet, perhaps, the cabinetmakers did not know quite what use to make of it. It remained for Chippendale, inspired by his quite immediate predecessors, to elaborate that carving in which a drawer moulding here or there is not to be taken into account. This interregnum, so to speak, or lull in furniture decoration from 1700-1730, or thereabouts, is a period at which small points such as those we have been considering may be more legitimately discussed. There is also so much of this simple style of furniture in oak, or walnut veneer, still to be found, that possessors of it will not object to its characteristics being examined and differentiated.

A word should be said about the small knee-hole tables such as that of our illustration, a remarkably good specimen, the property of Mrs. Collier, Willow Bank, Elgin (Plate LXXIX.2). This is of walnut veneer inlaid round each drawer—the edges of which, as I have mentioned, are moulded to overlap in the manner of the fourth of our classes—with small rectangles of dark and light wood. In the centre recess is a cupboard. What appears to be the upper drawer is a turn-down front which discloses, when pulled forward, a series of small drawers inside. The top is covered with leather. These are somewhat *bijou* pieces of furniture. Greater convenience for writing is obtained when, as in some cases, there is a sliding slab which draws out at one side, leaving the fixed top free for papers or books of reference. The engraved handles of Mrs. Collier's specimen are original and complete. It is not uncommon to find these knee-hole tables made of elm and oak.

KENSINGTON AND HAMPTON COURT

Kensington Palace and Hampton Court Palace still retain interesting examples of the furniture of this period. In Queen Mary's privy-chamber at Kensington is a work-table with top apparently of laburnum, showing the rings of growth. The legs are cabriole, but of harshly rectangular section. A spiral-turned card-table has six legs, and is elaborately inlaid with tulips and other flowers. Ivory is used to some extent, and the inlay on the frame is picked out, as to some of its leaves, with green paint or composition. To be compared with this there is a German escritoire, No. 4908 in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which displays much ivory and green and red paint—or perhaps shellac—in its inlay. The herring-bone inlay is to be seen on a burr walnut side-table. A walnut-veneered escritoire table with a *cartonnière* upon it has the same rectangular-sectioned cabriole leg, and curved stretchers to match. The feet are carved with acanthus leafage, and the three drawers in the frame have brass drop-handles of the pear-shaped type.

At Hampton Court Palace, in the second presence-chamber, there are two side-tables of burr walnut veneer, and with cabriole legs. These have the herring-bone inlay for bordering. One is nicely carved with acanthus leafage on the top of the legs, and has upright flutes in the frame. The King's drawing-room contains two nice card-tables of the period. These also are of walnut and display the herring-bone. The tops are shaped with a round at each corner, convenient for placing a candle, and on each side is a sunk oval for counters or money. They are covered with green velvet fastened with gold braid or gimp, and round-headed gilt nails. The rounded corner is the typical shape for the tops of card-tables in this period and later, in the early days of mahogany. The legs of these tables are somewhat too straight to be classed as cabriole, and have pad feet.

CHAPTER XIII

CHAIRS OF THE LATE SEVENTEENTH AND EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

THE reign of William III. marks an important change in the design and construction of the chair. Turned work gives way to flatter forms, especially in the uprights of the back. Footrails still continue very generally to be turned, but the tendency is for them to decrease in number, and when the curved or cabriole leg appears, cross-rails between the legs begin to disappear. As often as not in cabriole-legged chairs there are no cross-rails at all, and perhaps in considering the relative dates of chairs of the William and Anne periods we may to a considerable extent be guided by that fact. In a page of nineteen promiscuously selected chairs, settees, and stools of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, seven have no leg-rails. Of a similar collection of ten different so-called 'Hogarth chairs,' only two have leg-rails. Later still, in Chippendale's *Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director*, 1754, there are perhaps half as many chairs with leg-rails as there are without. No cabriole-legged chair has them in this his first book of designs, except one so-called Gothic chair, a very unfortunate invention, much disguised with rocaille ornament. When leg-rails are indicated they are either of rectangular section or elaborately shaped and carved, but not turned. One inference to be drawn is that manners were becoming more refined, and chairs suffered less from rough usage than they did in the oak period.

Another is that with the introduction of mahogany it was possible to make finer and stronger joints, the former comparative looseness of which necessitated in the Stuart chairs those numerous cross-rails with which we are familiar.[1]

This banishment of the turned rail seems to mark a more radical difference between the Stuart and later chairs than does the appearance of the cabriole leg. At any rate it is a more sudden development than the introduction of the latter. If we consider the form of the cabriole leg, there are the elements of it to be found in those chairs with convex and concave curves which I have already described. Place a convex curve above a concave one, smooth away the point of junction, and the cabriole leg at once appears. After all, it turns out to be merely a simplification of more elaborate shapes based upon sculpture. The terminal figures of Italian console-tables and French commodes simply disguise the two simple curves which in England, as a rule, take their place. This was due in part to a lack of sculptural talent, to a greater simplicity in our insular taste, and to the nature of the new wood, mahogany, which does not lend itself easily to carving in very high relief. Grinling Gibbons had no great successor, and if one had appeared he could not have done in mahogany what Gibbons did in lime-tree. Nevertheless we can point to not a few creditably carved lions' heads and human faces upon mahogany furniture (*cf.* Plate LXXXVII. 1).

Besides the lack of sculptors of high merit there is another influence to be considered, which was in part the cause of the decline of carving in relief. This is the wider use of inlay due to the importation of exotic coloured woods. A flatter field is required for the application of inlay, and a more open one than was

[1] A third inference might be that a sitter's feet now rested on a tolerably clean floor.

afforded in furniture carved in high relief. To this again we may attribute the restricted use of turned work, and the disappearance of the pierced and carved open-work backs of the late Stuart period. The decay of sculpture, then, and the increased use of inlay, may both be regarded as in part responsible for the discarding of the turned upright and for the introduction of the cabriole leg which follows. There can be but one change from the round, namely, to the flat or comparatively flat, and thus we find evolved the flat-shaped uprights and the flat spoon-backs of the William and Anne chairs.

William's name renders it unnecessary to look far for the foreign influence which introduced this change. As the Dutch were chiefly instrumental in the importation of foreign woods and the profuse employment of inlay—inlaid chairs being with them a speciality—to the Dutch must be assigned the chief credit of imposing that new style which was to reach its culmination of grace in the mahogany period.

What, then, are the main characteristics of the new style? In the first place, as might be expected from the continuous tendency to strive at lightness, the back is much more open than that of its Stuart precursor. The un-upholstered chair's back may be said to consist invariably of three parts: the two uprights and the splat, or central portion, which supports the sitter's back. These parts are much less adorned, especially in chairs of a not elaborate kind, than is the case with those of the late Stuart period. Even in fine chairs with much carving on the splat the uprights are often very plain. These plain surfaces by no means detract from the artistic merit of the chairs. A suggestion of poverty in them is partly counterbalanced by the fact that, just as the cabriole leg with its curves induces a play of light upon its plain surfaces, the back of these chairs when observed from the side is seen to be curved

to match, and reflects the light with great variety of tone. At the top of the back there is a convex curve to fit the nape of the sitter's neck. This becomes a concave to receive his shoulders, and comes forward again to a convex curve to support the small of his back. The utterly rigid perpendicularity of the old oak chair and its Stuart successor has disappeared. Instead we find the beginnings of a consideration of human anatomy. Arm-chairs are not too common, and where arms are used they have ceased to be ended with the acanthus-leaf.

The seat is extra broad and rounded at the side, or if the sides are flat the front is considerably wider than the back. It is a playful habit to ascribe this to the peculiarities of the Dutchman's build, but whether there was a difference or not in that respect between the two nations, our forefathers seem to have adopted the Dutch proportion or 'line of beauty' with equanimity.

The cabriole legs are broad across the top, and end either in claw-and-ball or pad feet, as the case may be, whilst leg-rails, as we have seen, have ceased to be a necessity.

To return to the back, the splat is seldom pierced. An extremely common form of ornament at the top of the back, and one considered pre-eminently Dutch, is a scallop shell, which also often appears upon the top of the cabriole legs (Plates LXXXIII.1, LXXXVI.4, LXXXVII.2). All crowns and cherubs' heads have disappeared, but the acanthus-leaf is still in use to edge the top of the back, the sides of the splat, and the front of the seat, occasionally.

As to the shape of the splat, there is an austere type of chair in which it has perfectly parallel sides. One of these, in oak with a rush seat—all very plain—is to be seen at Hampton Court. The most typical shape, however, is that which may be described as spoon or fiddle-backed. A great bulged shape, like the lower

part of a fiddle held uppermost, makes the top of the splat; this hollows in like the waist of the fiddle at the centre of the splat; spreads out again to an angle or a curve at the small of the back; and finishes with a concave towards the junction with the seat (Plates LXXXIV., LXXXVII. 1, 2). Sometimes the splat ends on a cross-rail, but in the great majority of cases it joins the seat exactly as does the splat of the Chippendale chair. The one is in fact the forerunner and first model of the other.

In some chairs the splat may be described as approaching rather to the baluster shape (Plate LXXXV.2) than to the fiddle, especially when the mouldings across the bottom where it joins the seat are of an architectural character. Later on a 'vase' shape (Plate LXXXV.3) is a more appropriate description, as in many of the chairs described as 'Hogarth' chairs, perhaps because in the artist's portrait of himself painting the comic muse he is seated upon a very clumsy and pronounced specimen of the class. This vase shape is formed by the broader part of the splat being decorated on the edge with acanthus-leaf carving. The end of the stalk is uppermost, and finishes in a volute suggestive of a pair of rudimentary handles on the shoulders of a vase (Plates LXXXIV. and LXXXV.3). Sometimes, as in Plate LXXXIV., the splat is joined to the outer uprights of the back by horizontal cross-pieces.

In these latter chairs there is an almost invariable shape for the lower parts of the two outer uprights of the back. For a few inches above the seat there is nearly always a straight piece with an angular outside shoulder. This is formed by the junction of the straight with the longish shallow concave of the outline in the upper part of the uprights. Hogarth flourished from about 1720 to 1764, so that this detailed description embraces a rather long period. As,

however, this particular angle in the outline of the upright is to be found on the much earlier Hampton Court chair before mentioned, we are justified in considering the chairs of the end of the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth century as very much of one type. The resemblances are indeed striking, both in general shape and in detail of ornamentation.

The motive for this angle so near the junction of the back with the seat is not that of gaining extra thickness where the chief strain is felt to be. Greater variety of outline is obtained by it, but the thickening of the upright, if any, is small. In Chippendale's first book of 1753 the angle is still to be traced in some few chairs, but it is the exception in his case. His usual custom is to broaden the upright gradually, if it is of a plain description, until it reaches the seat.

It is not very easy to find an obvious connecting-link between the caned chairs of the end of the seventeenth century and the wooden splatted chairs which fill up the interval ensuing before the rise of Chippendale. Perhaps the cane-backed and seated example illustrated (Plate LXXXIII.1) may be taken as such. It has the rather spreading top of a chair of Louis XIV. type at Hardwick Hall, to which I have referred, and which is reproduced by Mr. F. Litchfield opposite page 116 of his *History of Furniture*. A similar chair appears on page 161 of Mr. T. A. Strange's *French Interiors, Furniture, etc., during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. This projecting corner of the back may be seen also on a tall chair belonging to Mr. E. Hockliffe (Plate LXIX.2), with the carving of the back rounded at the ends. The arms and their supports strongly resemble those of the typical 'convex and concave' chairs in the same ownership (Plate LXVIII.3). Here, however, resemblance ends. Not one of the chairs of the last half of the seventeenth century has anything but a straight-sided seat. That of the one in

question is shaped into curves in what may be taken as the Dutch manner of most of the chairs and settees which illustrate this chapter. Also, it has the cabriole leg, and upon that leg at the back, towards the top, appears the C-curve which marks an approximation to the mahogany period.

If we bear in mind that the interval to be filled is a bare thirty or forty years, for Chippendale had certainly made much furniture before he published his folio in 1753, we need not be surprised to find a chair composed of such different elements, or wonder if the sweep from the top of the back down to the bottom of the hind legs is distinctly Chippendalean.

Two other chairs of much simpler outline may now be adduced. These have baluster-shaped splats and undecorated uprights to their backs, such as are associated with the name of Queen Anne. The first, belonging to Sir Charles Robinson (Plate LXXXIII.2), is very plain and without stretchers. It is made of some heavy and dark wood, which is not mahogany, and it is noticeable that it has a straight-sided seat, a detail which may approximate it to the period of the cane-backed chair. The next example, one of a fine set of walnut-wood belonging to Mr. R. W. Partridge, St. James's Street (Plate LXXXIII.3), has a very similar back, the same straight-sided seat, and not very heavy cabriole legs. In addition it has elegantly shaped leg-stretchers and a beautifully inlaid back. This inlay is in the French style of Marot and similar in quality, though not in design, to that upon the long clocks which date from about 1680. Perhaps to date this chair from 1700 to 1710 would be near the mark, though it might be a decade earlier.

At least six of the remaining illustrations of this chapter show that angle some few inches above the seat in the outer edges of the back, to which attention has already been drawn. It appears to be a very marked

characteristic of the Hogarthian period. Somewhere between 1720 and 1740 was the period in which this fashion reigned. Early Georgian should be its name. The scallop shell is a favourite form of decoration upon the tops of backs and legs and the fronts of seats, and walnut is the favourite wood. Not till 1720, be it remembered, is mahogany said to have been used, and even after that some time must have elapsed before a large supply came over. In any case, the chair in two positions (Plate LXXXIV.) belonging to Mr. J. Denham Smith, of Peveril Point, Swanage, Dorset, is one of a pair of a light wood of unascertained species. The Victoria and Albert Museum specimens, an arm-chair, No. 630, which is inlaid on the splat, and No. 677, are of walnut wood veneered, and walnut wood respectively (Plate LXXXV.2). The acanthus-leaf carving on each of these is of the same quality as that of Chippendale's chairs, but the shaped fronts of their seats are typical of the kind of chair which preceded him. The two settees (Plate LXXXVII.2, 3) in the same Museum are also of walnut wood (No. 629) and walnut wood veneered (No. 676). The first is inlaid on its splats with flowers in lighter wood. The second is noticeable for the eagles' heads at the ends of the arms. The chair (Plate LXXXV.1) and settee (Plate LXXXVII.1) decorated with lions' heads and feet are part of a splendid and numerous set, also in walnut wood, belonging to Mr. R. W. Partridge. Most of these examples have the pad-footed back legs, which may be described as pre-Chippendalean. They are not a common characteristic of his style. We are, however, approaching it very obviously in the chairs belonging to the Earl of Ancaster, and especially the one owned by Mr. W. R. Phelips, of Montacute, and No. 216 from the Victoria and Albert Museum. In all of these, however, the pad-footed back leg persists (Plate LXXXVI.). Two ordinary but useful types remain to be considered. The first is the corner

chair, sometimes called 'roundabout.' Its peculiarity is that the front of the seat is not a straight line but an angle, under which projects, beyond the rest, the front leg. The example illustrated is one of a remarkably good pair, of mahogany, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 312. It is assigned to the second half of the eighteenth century, but from its splat and finialled cross-stretchers and other peculiarities, it may safely be assigned to the first half. Plainer oaken specimens are common enough in the country (Plate XCII.2).

Finally, there is the Windsor chair of commerce, which deserves mention as a type occasionally—as in Mr. W. H. Bliss's yew example (Plate CLX.1) of Gothic style—exalted into something approaching the artistic. Great numbers of these, with considerable varieties of shape, are illustrated in the books on old American colonial furniture by Mrs. Morse and Miss Singleton. They abound both there and here, together with the slat-backed, or crossbar-backed, chairs with rush seats. Mrs. Morse says (p. 157) that Windsor chairs appeared first in America, at Philadelphia, about 1730, where they were largely made. She attributes the name of Windsor to the tradition that one of the Georges popularised the style, an example of which he had seen in a shepherd's cottage. *Se non è vero è ben trovato.* The example of our illustration is an historic one. It formerly belonged to Oliver Goldsmith, and was bequeathed by him to Dr. Hawes in 1774. It is painted green, and has a rather curious circular seat (Plate CLX.2).

Reference should be made to Hampton Court Palace for a very fine set of early eighteenth or late seventeenth century chairs at present in the great hall and the adjoining room. These have the angle beforementioned about nine inches above the seat. The cabriole legs have hoof feet and shaped and carved

stretchers. The splat suggests a jar shape, disguised with carving, or perhaps a fiddle-shaped spoon handle would be a nearer description. It is pierced and well carved in the style of Marot. The seats are upholstered in needlework. This set of ten chairs is one of the finest of its kind existing.

At the sale of the Marquis of Anglesey's furniture from Beaudesert at Christie's, on 12th January 1905, there was an exceptional chair which fetched the high price of three hundred guineas. It was described as a 'Charles II. oak chair, with rounded back, pierced and carved with flowers and foliage, on boldly carved legs and stretchers and claw feet.' The rocaille work and C-curves, cabriole legs and claw feet, which were its characteristics, showed that the ascription to the period of Charles II. was a wrong one. The eighteenth century must have seen, perhaps, three decades before this chair was made, and English or French, it belongs to the period we are reviewing. The round back and seat, however, are perhaps found of an earlier date. There is in the Victoria and Albert Museum a chair (No. 98) upon six turned legs, connected by two circular frames corresponding to the circumference of the seat. Rails lead from each leg and meet in the centre like the spokes of a wheel. The back has four slanting supports, in the spaces between which are three oval splats filled in with cane-work. On the supports there appears the elongated rosette described before as peculiar to the Carolean chair. The top rail of the back has incised carving, such as might have been done in the early seventeenth century. This chair, stated to be Dutch, is dated 1640 —a very early year for the appearance of the rosette.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MAHOGANY PERIOD AND THE PATTERN-BOOKS

WE have now arrived at a period which it has become the fashion to designate as that of Chippendale. Thereby, as is usually the result of exalting one name at the expense of others, some injustice has been done. A writer is anxious to offer strong reasons for his advocacy of the claims of his subject to pre-eminence. He has a tendency, in the result, to blind himself to his paragon's defects, and to deny to others what merits they possess. Ruskin, engrossed in Turner, condemned another genius, Constable. This has to a large extent been the attitude of historians of furniture as regards Chippendale. A man of whose life we know extremely little, but who in his books has left incontrovertible evidence that along with taste which was great, but by no means infallible, he possessed the soul of a tradesman, has been elevated to a pinnacle of honour which he scarcely deserves. One might suppose that from his single brain sprang suddenly and without warning the style called after him. Never could there be a greater mistake than to suppose any such thing. Chippendale has no more claim to be the inventor of a new general shape of furniture than he has to the origination of the cabriole leg. He is but one link in the chain of those who produced the gradual evolution of shapes of eighteenth-century English furniture; and though he is one of the strongest links, his merits are not so over-

shadowing as to warrant our setting him unduly above contemporary and succeeding cabinetmakers and designers. If they erred in the way of extravagance, making monstrosities in the fashions of Chinese, French rococo, and Gothic, so to the full did he. It would, I think, be a fairer, though less picturesque appellation, if we called the period which we have arrived at that of mahogany, not of Chippendale. Then no injustice will be done to deserving designers; the period will be enlarged so as to include all those developments which were due to the introduction, about 1720, of that strong and fine-grained wood, and we shall be saved from the anomaly of calling after Chippendale a period in which, though he flourished, he was not in the least way celebrated. This will not preclude our doing justice to his merits, and appreciating the manner in which, taking barer forms as he found them, he improved and decked them out with ornamental details. These, while adding to the beauty, did not detract from the strength and usefulness of the general shape of a former generation.

We have come to an age of activity in publishing books of furniture designs. If Chippendale had been first in the field to publish his book he would have a stronger claim to give his name to an epoch. Mrs. K. Warren Clouston, however, in her excellent book on *The Chippendale Period in English Furniture*, p. 69, thinks it probable that he was forestalled by the Society of Upholsterers and Cabinetmakers, which brought out *One Hundred New and Genteel Designs, being all the most approved Patterns of Household Furniture in the present Taste.* The volume is unfortunately undated, and its priority to Chippendale must be concluded from intrinsic evidence. It contains designs for writing-tables, bureau bookcases, chairs, and other objects of furniture, some in the French, others in the Gothic style, which, if executed and still existing, would certainly be classed by their owners as 'Chippendale.'

Mrs. Clouston (p. 70) supposes that Chippendale at first belonged to the Society, but left it to publish on his own account; and that the Society's designs are imitated from the furniture of Chippendale which, before he had brought out his own book, he had already executed. There can be no means of positively proving this; and, if we agree with Mrs. Clouston that the Society's work was the first to appear, it would be perhaps fairer to allow them a modicum of originality. French ornament, at any rate, was there for the cabinet-makers one and all, without exception, to adapt; and many of the Society's designs are such as any reasonably accomplished draughtsman might have evolved from the plainer shapes of the early eighteenth-century furniture, by adding a cabriole leg with a few curves and twists from France, or making a perfunctory excursion into Gothic. A syndicate such as the Cabinet-makers and Upholsterers, whatever the merits of its production, could never give its name to a style. Chippendale came next with a tall folio, and has reaped the fruits of publishing with a picturesque name and a date, even if his great merits are not taken into account.

If stress were to be laid upon this matter of priority in publishing books of furniture designs, perhaps William Jones deserves mention. In 1739 he gave to the world his *Gentlemen's or Builders' Companion*, in which are to be found mirrors and slab tables. The mirrors are somewhat tall and upright, with broken or domed pediments and jutting corners similar to, though lighter than, those of a previous age, for the general style of which his more famous namesake was partly responsible. The tables are elaborately carved with cabriole legs, shell centres and festoons of flowers. Some are supported by terminal figures with scroll and leaf-work. William Jones, however, in his style belongs rather to a former period, and, moreover, claimed the title of

architect, not that of a designer of furniture. The same may be said of William Kent, who as a universal director of the artistic conscience of the nobility and gentry of England laid out their gardens for them, and was referred to upon such diverse subjects as those of picture-frames, mirrors, tables, chairs, candlesticks, and even fashions in dress. One of his books, published in 1744, contains a slab table, together with vases, candlesticks, and plenty of gold and silver plate designs. The versatility of his practice is similar to that of his successors, the Adams, and his theories on sophisticated gardening are perhaps responsible for the extraordinary rustic furniture designs of Manwaring.

Sir William Chambers is a greater name to reckon with for his influence on furniture. He was born in 1726, and was of Scotch descent, though his father lived, and he himself was born, in Sweden. The son took to the sea, and went as a supercargo to Canton. So much was he struck by the Chinese buildings and furniture that in 1757[1] he published a work, illustrated by such men as Rooker and Paul Sandby. The idea was that the furniture illustrations should be 'useful to our cabinetmakers,' and they had, in fact, a great influence upon them. It is to be observed that Chippendale's book came out at least three years before Chambers's folio. In it we find evidence broadcast of the full development of the 'Chinese craze.' It is more than probable that Chippendale may have seen something of Chambers's collection of drawings before they were published. It is at any rate difficult to divest Chambers of his claims to be, though not the originator, at least a great advancer of the fashion, seeing that he actually went to China and drew inspiration from the fountain-head. Evidence that the craze was in full possession of the town some years before either Chippendale

[1] The *Dictionary of National Biography* gives 1759 as the date of this work, and 1752 for Chippendale's first edition.

or Chambers published their books is afforded by an old coloured engraving in the writer's possession. This print, drawn by J. Wale and engraved and published by Thomas Bowles, shows Vauxhall Gardens in the year 1751. It is entitled 'A View of the Chinese Pavillions and Boxes in Vaux Hall Gardens,' and shows in truth the wildest architectural miscellany which can be conceived. The Gothic pointed arch supports a classic dome, which is flanked by details combined, it seems, of Moorish and rococo. It is qualified to be called Chinese by certain figures—painted perhaps—in the central box, which are undoubtedly Oriental. There is the peculiar conical hat which appears in the Chinese figures upon furniture by Chippendale and others. The title of the print is, however, sufficient indication of the supposed nature of the conglomeration. The Chinese craze in various manifestations was, in fact, much older than either Chambers or Chippendale. Besides the fact that William Halfpenny published an inferior book of *New Designs for Chinese Temples, etc.*, as early as 1750, we may go back to the year 1682 and find instances of silver toilet services decorated with the same Chinese personages as those of Vauxhall. Queen Mary, the consort of William III., was an ardent collector of Oriental porcelain, and there is little doubt that, the attention of Western nations having been once called to the art of China, the fashion in one form or another was bound to recur. It is found in designs of Boulle-work furniture of a much earlier date than that of the period under discussion, and must have received an impetus from that Siamese embassy which is said to have brought over many specimens of Chinese lacquer as presents to Louis XIV. Evelyn, in 1664 (June 22), describes all sorts of things sent by the Jesuit missionaries to their order in Paris, including 'their idols, saints, *pagods*, of most ugly serpentine, monstrous and hideous shapes . . . pictures of men

and countries rarely painted . . . flowers, trees, beasts, birds, etc., excellently wrought.' He himself translated a *Relation of China* by a Mr. Van der Douse. Addison refers to ornaments of China and Japan in 1711, and De Foe also in 1724. We may therefore conclude that while there was so much of Chinese in the air many very distant imitations were unduly called Chinese. Chambers's drawings must have been an admirable corrective of false notions as to Oriental shapes, and to him must be assigned the merit of at least having regulated the latest manifestation of the craze in furniture. This, in fact, is the claim which Chambers makes in his preface, 'that they might be of use in putting a stop to the extraordinary fancies that daily appear under the name of Chinese, though most of them are mere inventions, the rest copies from the lame representations found on porcelain and paper-hangings.'

Chambers took to architecture, went to Italy, and returned in 1755, bringing, as had been done before, Italian carvers to execute the marble mantelpieces which he designed. In these he discarded the great superstructures of Inigo Jones and Wren and Gibbons. The chimneypiece was no longer regarded as part and parcel of the panel decoration of the room, and became almost of the nature of a movable, in so far as it was ordered without reference to the style of the room, exactly as nowadays we purchase a table or a chair. At Kew he had the opportunity of practising the Chinese fashion on a great scale, whilst in Somerset House he showed his capacities in a more serious style. His appointment as Royal Architect and Treasurer of the Royal Academy, together with his own undoubted culture and intimacy with men of taste, made him just such an authority as Kent; and there is no doubt that his influence upon the cabinetmakers was very great indeed. We shall see later on what was his actual cabinet-designing capacity.

It is convenient in this place, before discussing Chippendale and his chief contemporaries and successors in detail, to give a list of the principal furniture design-books which were published in the eighteenth century. They do not afford us such irrefragable evidence as to dates as was supplied by the stamp which the French 'Maître Ébéniste' was obliged by law, after the year 1751, to place upon his furniture. That mark in many cases enables us to give an exact attribution of a commode or a table to a Riesener or a Carlin, a Pafrat or a Petit. It must not be supposed that even the majority of the designs in these books were executed by their authors. Chippendale himself remarks of a certain plate in his books, that he should have 'much pleasure in the execution of it.' In the list of what might have been, may no doubt be placed most of those grandiose and fantastic bedsteads in which the designers loved most to allow their fancy full play. In another list could be grouped together those designs which were carried out with limitations, those in which (upon the score of expense) much carving was omitted, whilst the general shape was retained. It is probable that in the case of many of these the world has not lost much; perhaps it has even gained by the omission of unnecessary ornament.

Thirdly, we must remember that those books were not merely published by the author to show what he himself had done, or could do, but were intended as pattern-books for cabinetmakers in London and the provinces, and indeed wherever English furniture designs were required. An eclectic provincial might chop and change between designs, so as to produce a chair or table whose every detail might recall something in the pattern-book, though its exact prototype would be sought in vain. This would account for the existence of many actual examples which show excellent shape and workmanship, but can be definitely attri-

buted to none of the known makers. Charming pieces of this kind are frequent amongst our illustrations, and show to what a pitch of artistic feeling many an anonymous carver and joiner could attain.

Some of the books deal almost entirely with the decoration of a room, but they are worth referring to as showing how the same types of ornament would be employed upon a plaster ceiling, and upon a sideboard or a tea-caddy.

We have noticed already the Society of Upholsterers and Cabinetmakers, with its *One Hundred New and Genteel Designs*, as probably the first genuine furniture book of this period, and referred to W. Jones, 1739, and W. Kent, 1744. Then comes Chippendale with his first edition of *The Gentleman and Cabinetmaker's Director, being a large Collection of the Most Elegant and Useful Designs of Household Furniture in the Gothic, Chinese, and Modern Taste.* This is by no means the whole of the lengthy title of the first edition of 1754. His first-known plates are dated 1753. There was another edition of the *Director* in 1759, and a third in 1762.

Next we have Thomas Johnson, a carver, who brought out designs for picture-frames, candelabra, ceilings, clock-cases, etc., in parts at first, but bound up in 1758. In 1761 he published *One Hundred and Fifty New Designs.* He was a lover of the wildest French rococo, and the fancies of Meissonier were not unknown to him. It is probable that some still existing and so-called Chippendale furniture of this description is due to Thomas Johnson, but little, if anything, can be definitely ascribed.

Somewhat anterior to him come Copeland and Lock, with designs of picture-frames and mirrors and pier-tables, but they were scarcely books, rather small sets of plates. Some by Copeland date as early as 1746, whilst he joined with Lock in various small

publications between 1752 and 1769. Matthias Lock's book of 1769, *A New Book of Pier Frames, Ovals, Girandoles, Tables*, familiarises us beforehand with the manner of Adam and Sheraton. He was a good sketcher of designs, and one drawing of an acanthus leaf is particularly noticeable. There is a set of four mirrors at Buckingham Palace, in the light open gilt style, with a large, long-beaked bird at the top, which might well be his invention.

I may just mention the books of Halfpenny, 1750, and Edwards and Darly, 1754, which contained details for the perpetration of the Chinese style in its most advanced degree, and then pass on to Robert Manwaring who, in 1765, published *The Cabinet and Chairmaker's Real Friend and Companion.* Manwaring seems to have had a great deal of influence upon the Society of Upholsterers, seeing that *The Chairmaker's Guide*, by himself and others, brought out in 1766, is very similar to the Society's book of *circa* 1753. His book has been condemned as utterly worthless; its merits, if any, being due to Chippendale, and its defects sufficient to outweigh its virtues. Certainly at his worst, Manwaring is a very bad designer; but he varies, as all men do, and need not be entirely condemned for the sake of exalting Chippendale. If it is said that Chippendale was a designer of merit for years before his book came out, who knows what ideas he may not have culled from contemporaries, just as he and all borrowed from France? It would appear more just to credit Manwaring with having added at least something to the common stock, during the years in which he worked before the publication of his book, rather than to accuse him of borrowing all from Chippendale. It is true his book came out after the latter's, but it enjoyed a vogue of its own, which is perhaps evidence that it was not regarded as an abject plagiarism.

The work brought out by Ince and Mayhew, *The Universal System of Household Furniture*, undated, but *circa* 1770, carries extravagance in the more florid style of Chippendale to an extreme. Nevertheless, there are more sober productions which are pretty enough, besides the horrible chimneypieces in the Gothic taste, all pinnacles and crockets, or those in the Chinese, which are all of pointed leaves and pagoda tops. The fact is, that where so many books were published within a few years of each other, all following the same fashion, it was inevitable that they should be a conglomeration of better and worse. If Ince and Mayhew go mad over a big bed, they atone for it in a lady's secrétaire, and can point to other people's vagaries in excuse for their own. At the same time, it must be admitted that some of their almost solid-backed, presumably hall chairs with cabriole legs and turned leg-rails are very ugly, both in general shape and arrangement of detail. Their book contained 300 designs on 95 plates. It would have been a wonder if some of these were not inferior, and perhaps some of their trays with pierced borders are too reminiscent of tambourines.

J. Wyatt, who published *Forty-two Original Coloured Drawings of Ornaments to Scale, Ceilings, Panels, etc.*, from 1770 to 1785, was not a furniture designer, but he was responsible for many of those beautiful plaster ceilings to be found in Harley Street and Portland Place, in which the details, such as the oval fan pattern, are in keeping with those of the cabinetmakers.

Similar books were those of P. Columbani, *A New Book of Ornaments*, 1775, and *A Variety of Capitals, Friezes, Cornices . . . likewise Twelve Designs for Chimneypieces*, 1776. These are good drawings on a large scale. He uses the Greek anthemion ornament, especially the honeysuckle variety, vases, and cassolette

shapes, with the usual classical figures and acanthus leaves. In some plates the tops of four chimneypieces are piled one above the other, an arrangement which does not conduce to a good opinion of each individual design.

Another room decorator of good taste was N. Wallis. His first publication seems to have been a *Book of Ornament in the Palmyrene Taste*, 1771, whilst in *The Complete Modern Joiner*, 1772, he gives designs for chimneypieces and doorcases with their mouldings. His chimneypieces are in the light classical style which is associated with the name of the Adams. His ceiling ornaments are rather more French in feeling, with naturalistic wheat-ears and sprays of vine.

Similar designs appear in the works of Matthias Darly, who engraved the books of Chippendale and Ince and Mayhew. His chief production is *A Compleat Body of Architecture, Embellished with a Great Variety of Ornaments*, 1770 and 1773. His classical chimneypieces are as good as others, whilst his lighter style is similar to that of Lock or the Adams.

Thomas Crunden brought out a series of small books, such as *The Joyner and Cabinetmaker's Darling* in 1765, *The Carpenter's Companion for Chinese Railings and Gates* in 1770, and *The Chimney-piece Maker's Daily Assistant*, 1776.

From 1777 onwards, Michael Angelo Pergolesi published *Designs for Various Ornaments*, many of which are similar to those of the Adams, as was only to be expected from a man who, as their assistant, was probably as much to them as Gibbons was to Sir Christopher Wren. Pergolesi is responsible for many of those chimneypieces which were adorned with the little pictures of Cipriani and Angelica Kauffmann. If I mention Pergolesi, I must not omit George Richardson, who rivalled the Adams in culture and achievements. To him, just as safely as to the Adams, we

may attribute many of those chimneypieces in variously coloured marbles in classical style, which still grace houses in the vicinity of Cavendish Square. His earliest work was a *Book of Ceilings in the Style of the Antique Grotesque*, 1776, and his latest, *Ornaments in the Antique Style*, 1816.

Having disposed of these, we come to a great name, that of Heppelwhite, though the spelling varies. Him and his connection with Thomas Shearer and others, responsible for the *Cabinetmakers' London Book of Prices*, produced in 1788, we shall have to discuss at greater length. It is sufficient here to note that Heppelwhite's book is *The Cabinetmaker and Upholsterer's Guide or Repository of Designs for every Article of Household Furniture*, and was published in 1788-1789, with another edition in 1794.

Last is Thomas Sheraton, the most cultivated of all the genuine furniture makers and designers. His *Cabinetmaker and Upholsterer's Drawing-book* dates 1791, 1793, and 1794. The *Cabinet Dictionary* was published 1803, and *The Cabinetmaker, Upholsterer, and General Artist's Encyclopædia* from 1804 to 1807.

Mr. R. S. Clouston, writing in *The Connoisseur* Magazine, September 1903, has drawn attention to the fact that in the Art Library of the Victoria and Albert Museum there is a collection of plates labelled '*Chippendale's Designs for Sconces, Chimney and Looking-glass frames, In the Old French Style, Adapted for Carvers and Gilders, Fashionable and Ornamental Cabinetmakers, Modellers, etc.* 11 Plates. Price 7s.' There is no publisher's name, no frontispiece or letterpress, nor name of designer or engraver. These it appears were published by one J. Weale at some date before 1834, and encouraged him to a bolder venture in supposed Chippendale designs. The latter are apparently from the old copperplates of T. Johnson's

book, from which he erased the name, and substituted that of T. Chippendale. He has had the audacity to alter the frontispiece, substituting for Johnson's original title an entirely new one, with Chippendale's name, and introducing himself as publisher instead of the original Robert Sayer. He published another, but different, edition in 1858-59. Students of furniture are indebted to Mr. R. S. Clouston for these instances of literary forgery. 'As far as my knowledge goes,' he writes, 'no one has ever before taken an important book, published only about eighty years previously, and reissued it as by another.' Not the least curious part of the business is that none of the writers on furniture seem to have noticed the last two publications, and only Mr. J. A. Heaton the first, and he, as Mr. Clouston points out, was deceived.

CHAPTER XV

CHIPPENDALE: I

CONSIDERING how comparatively recent is the period which Chippendale adorned, it is somewhat surprising that we should not know more about the man who, as pointed out by Mrs. K. W. Clouston, has usurped a privilege of kings in giving his name to a decorative style. It is true that this is a posthumous claim, supported mainly by the common practice of attributing most mahogany furniture to Chippendale. If he had been widely celebrated during his life it is almost impossible that such meagre details should alone remain; there must surely have been some casual mention of him in contemporary light or ephemeral literature to which we could refer. We may place him at the same level as a master in another branch of art who flourished a little earlier. Of Paul Lamerie, the great silversmith, we know considerably more than we do of Chippendale. He at any rate left a will which gives us interesting details concerning his life's work. As far as is known at present Chippendale's name never occurs in inventories of the period. In the American colonies, whither so much furniture was shipped, it was not heard of. It is possible that such a writer as Jane Austen might, if she had known it, have enshrined his name in *Mansfield Park*, when she describes Sotherton as 'amply furnished in the taste of fifty years back, with shining floors, solid mahogany, rich damask, marble, gilding and carving,

each handsome in its way.' The book was written from 1812 to 1814, so that she was referring to a period exactly coincident with the last and largest edition of Chippendale's book. The poet Cowper who, writing in 1785, devotes a considerable number of lines to the evolution of *The Sofa*, might also have been expected to name some master in the craft, but Chippendale's name is nowhere found; and we are left with the tradition that he came from Worcestershire to London in the reign of George I., and that his father before him was a carver of mirror-frames. It is, however, not at all unlikely that information might be gleaned from possibly still extant bills or correspondence about the furniture he made for great houses.

The only reference I have found of comparatively early date occurs in the extremely interesting but somewhat ill-natured work by John Thomas Smith, *Nollekens and his Times*. On page 240 of the second volume of the second edition, dated 1829, speaking of St. Martin's Lane, he says: 'The extensive premises, No. 60, now occupied by Mr. Stutely the builder, were formerly held by Chippendale, the most famous upholsterer and cabinetmaker of his day, to whose folio work on household furniture the trade formerly made constant reference. It contains, in many instances, specimens of the style of furniture so much in vogue in France in the reign of Louis XIV., but which for many years past has been discontinued in England. However, as most fashions come round again, I should not wonder, notwithstanding the beautifully classic change brought in by Thomas Hope, Esq., if we were to see the unmeaning scroll and shell work, with which the furniture of Louis' reign was so profusely incumbered, revive; when Chippendale's book will again be sought after with redoubled avidity, and as many of the copies must have been sold as waste paper, the few remaining will probably bear rather a high price.'

While he calls Chippendale the 'most famous cabinet-maker of his day,' Smith does him less than justice in attributing to him the mere imitation of French furniture, in a style, too, which we associate rather with Louis XV. than his predecessor. But the passage has a double prophetic value. Smith is twice right. The value of Chippendale's folio is at least £12, and his furniture is being reproduced broadcast, whilst fantastic prices are paid for originals in his style, as to which there is no exact proof that they have come from his hand. We have to judge from the intrinsic merits of the objects, and when so many clever carvers in the trade probably made, as Smith puts it, 'constant reference' to his designs, we may be certain that some fine specimens are merely 'Chippendalean.'

In order then to learn what manner of man Chippendale was, we must use his book as our chief guide. From there we may learn whether he was educated and refined, as Sheraton was; whether the artist or tradesman was uppermost in his composition.

The first edition of Chippendale's book, *The Gentleman and Cabinetmaker's Director*, has on its title-page a description of the author as 'Of St. Martin's Lane, Cabinetmaker,' and is advertised at the bottom of the page as for sale at Edinburgh and Dublin. The 'ornaments' are 'Calculated to Improve and Refine the present Taste, and suited to the Fancy and Circumstances of Persons in all Degrees of Life.' Then come two Latin quotations from Ovid and Horace respectively, so that we may conclude that Chippendale, whilst not above the execution of modest commissions, intended to imply that he had claims to be a person of culture and worthy to be patronised by the nobility. In the enlarged edition of 1762 he goes further in both directions. The chief title is retained as it was, with the exception that the phrase 'in the most fashionable' takes the place of 'in the Gothic, Chinese, and Modern

Taste.' The modest Latin quotations disappear, but their place is taken by 'a short explanation of the Five Orders of Architecture.' This is one of the almost inevitable accompaniments of a furniture design-book of the period. It has no immediate connection with the matter in hand, but is inserted to give a tone to a subject which might otherwise be regarded as beneath the notice of a nobleman or gentleman. Perhaps there was a certain jealousy felt by the cabinetmakers towards the architect (especially the Adams, after 1760) who, when he condescended to design a pier-table was, by reason of the higher branch of art which he adorned, more certain of being noticed. In any case, the furniture designer having, according to custom, made his effort to cling to the skirts of a more acknowledged respectability by figuring the five orders, proceeds to eschew architectural inspiration, except to a very limited degree. What concessions he makes to it are chiefly in the direction of Chinese and Gothic, towards which such a thing as 'a rule for drawing of the spiral lines of the volute of the Ionic order,' or 'a parallel of the Ancient Architecture with the Modern' are but of moderate usefulness. The rules of perspective are lugged in by other authors, such as Sheraton, for very much the same object. We may say that the architectural influence of the five orders upon the furniture designers is rather less noticeable than the effect of the much-paraded Michael Angelo upon the practice of Sir Joshua Reynolds; and that the perspective of their chairs, screens, and tables is often inferior. Chippendale now calls himself an upholsterer, and includes a much greater variety in his list of articles. Besides regular furniture there appear 'Cisterns for Water, Lanthorns and Chandeliers . . . Chimneypieces . . . Stone Grates . . . "Boarders" and Brass-work for Furniture.' He has become more of an universal provider, and the change may perhaps be compared to that which

transformed the artistic brass-chaser Thomire, of pre-revolutionary France, into the 'Thomire et Cie' of the Restoration. If Chippendale ever posed as an artist whose designs would suffer from the least alteration of a detail; if he was ever jealous of his conceptions, it must have been at some early period of his life. Certainly in 1762 he most naïvely shows the tradesman's soul. He actually lays claim to a special ingenuity in the construction of his designs, 'which are so contrived, that if no one Drawing should singly answer the Gentlemen's Taste, there will yet be found a Variety of Hints sufficient to construct a new one.' Suppleness of attitude could scarcely further go. Though it seems a hard judgment, there is undoubtedly some truth in Mr. J. Aldam Heaton's summing-up to the effect that Chippendale was 'not a man of education or modesty, but a very commonplace hawker of his wares, prepared to make anything that will please his customers and fill his purse.'

This, however, is less than justice. It is not for nothing that Chippendale's name is remembered before those of his contemporaries. His book was the best of its class, even if it was not the fountainhead which inspired the rest. We have seen that when the same decorative ideas were so broadcast it was hardly likely that from Chippendale should emanate all the good. After all, the contribution of each individual artist to the sum of advancement is generally small. What were these new ideas? Impalpable enough! It is not a question of an entire change of shape in furniture from that of a previous generation. That, we have seen, is a thing which seldom or never occurs in the evolution of furniture. If we are to sum up what Chippendale did, it amounts to this: that he took the main shapes as he found them, somewhat plain and severe; he left them decidedly better proportioned, lighter, more decorative, yet not less useful than they

were. The ideas reduce themselves to a matter of artistic 'feeling,' a sense of proportion which recognises, for instance, that the breadth of a chair splat is too great or too little for the empty spaces on each side of it. It seems a small affair, this; but such affairs make all the difference between the ugly and the beautiful. For the most part, the artist is a clever thief who takes his notions from whencesoever he can. 'Je prends mon bien partout où je le trouve,' might Shakespeare and Chippendale each say in their respective degrees. This is not to be a mere plagiarist, as Manwaring is accused of plagiarising Chippendale. The cleverness alone excuses the theft; even exalts it from the category of thefts entirely, if the plumes which the daw borrows are found to be so skilfully dyed and arranged as to make a something which is better than the original. Chippendale was, at his best, well equal to the task. Mr. Heaton suggests several sources for his borrowings. The table-leg with an eagle or dog's-claw foot, and ornamented at the top with acanthus foliage in low relief, he finds in Jacques Androuet, called du Cerceau, who published a book of designs in 1550. The carver's foliage for mirrors in Androuet's second book is so exactly, he asserts, like what Chippendale produced, that 'he must have had a copy.' Chippendale's fluttering ribands for chair-backs he traces to the book which Bérain brought out in connection with Chauveau and Le Moine in 1710. His clock-cases he borrowed, says Mr. Heaton, from Marot, who published his book of designs at Amsterdam in 1712; whilst in J. C. Erassmus's work (Nuremberg, 1659) may be found the exact prototype of the highly ornamental mirror-frames of either Lock, Johnson, or Chippendale. From Meissonier, the great French designer of the most extravagant rococo work, Chippendale is also said to have borrowed much—and all these contentions are capable of more or less

support. This merely proves that there is nothing new under the sun. The cabriole leg became fashionable at the end of the seventeenth century, but its double curve is found to all intents and purposes the same upon German or Flemish furniture, and on some oak furniture which is presumably English—heavy long oak tables, for instance—which date as early as 1620. Where did these earlier carvers find it? The answer, of course, is that the cabriole leg is as old as the Romans and Saxons. Classical tripods and tables with legs shaped like those of animals are practically also cabriole legs, and the smooth cabriole leg of Roman, of Saxon times, and of 1700 is merely a debasement in which the foot is the only animal-shaped part remaining.

It matters little, except to students, whence you take your idea: it matters much what use you make of it, and Chippendale at his best made better things from what he borrowed. Unquestionably his merits shine forth most in chairs, and they, together with little fretted tables, not very elaborate bookcases and screens represent, it is said, what from his hand actually remains. It will be remembered that the William III., Queen Anne, and early Georgian chair has been described as one in which turned work gives way to flatter forms. Foot-rails tend to disappear, especially that elaborate front-stretcher which is so conspicuous a feature of the Charles II. period. Backs become very open, and cease to be of the rigid straight up-and-down shape inseparable from the old oak period and the one immediately succeeding. The lines of the chair are now suited to human anatomy. The old stock-in-trade of crowns and cherubs and S-curves disappears, and in their place appears the scallop-shell common on the summits of chair-backs and the tops of legs. The splat is sometimes very severely straight when viewed from the front, and then assumes various

versions of a vase or fiddle or baluster shape. Very important to notice is it that the splat no longer terminates on a cross-rail, but comes down to the back of the seat. I have referred also to an almost invariable shape which occurs in the lower part of the uprights of the chair-back, namely, the straight piece which appears above the seat and alters to a concave curve, an angular outside shoulder dividing the two.

It will be found that in Chippendale's chairs much of the old style remains. As a rule, in the early eighteenth-century chair the junction of the top of the back with the sides is a round one, though there are exceptions to the rule. Chippendale uses this rounded end of the back to a considerable extent. Out of about seventy different designs for chairs taken as they come, perhaps twenty may be described as rounded at the end, but nearly forty have that decided bow shape in the upper cross-piece of the back which is associated with his name. Divested of extraneous ornament, it consists of a convex outer curve in the centre with a concave curve on each side of it. At the extreme ends there is a little upward twist which may be said to correspond to the horns of the Cupid's-bow shape. This form, to which he was obviously so partial, we should be inclined to assign to him as one of his contributions to the general stock, did we not find that it, or something very nearly approaching to it, occurs before his time. There are instances of very decidedly early chairs of a plain description with bow-shaped upper back-rails, which preclude our ascribing the form to Chippendale. Short of that, he deserves the full credit of having varied and adorned the shape with infinite grace, and the Cupid's-bow back may be accepted as one of his chief characteristics.

Of his riband-back chairs there are various opinions. He himself set great store by them, and was obviously quite untroubled by any doubts as to whether fluttering

riband shapes are suited to woodwork. 'Several sets,' he says, 'have been made which have given entire satisfaction.' 'If I may speak without vanity,' they 'are the best I have ever seen (or perhaps have ever been made).' Mr. J. A. Heaton, on the other hand, affirms that 'the riband is almost the worst type of ornament which the Chippendale chair ever carried.' This opinion is sound from the point of view of absolute purism and utilitarian self-restriction in ornament, but with the beautiful examples of Chippendale before us—such as that superb arm-chair lent by Colonel Lyons to the Victoria and Albert Museum (Plate xcv.)—it is impossible to be hampered by any such limitations. Once we begin to listen to the objections of the purist, we must throw over a large part of the decoration of the Renaissance and of later French decoration also. We must condemn the birds and fruit and flowers of Grinling Gibbons, and, to be quite consistent, throw over all the shapes of pottery and porcelain which are borrowed from the worker in metal and so unsuited to be 'thrown' upon the potter's wheel. Far too much which derives its beauty from the free use of ornament founded on all kinds of different materials has been given to the world for us to condemn the fluttering mahogany ribands of Chippendale. It is a matter of the taste of each individual designer. If by such means he produces a beautiful chair, let us not look askance at ribands. When an inferior designer uses them badly then we may express a wish that he had been less floridly ambitious.

Chippendale has one unvarying method of treatment for splatted open-backed chairs wherein he differs from his great successor Sheraton. The splat is always joined to the seat, never to a cross-rail. This is the rule for all his ordinary chairs. Those in the Chinese style, in which the whole back is covered with a lattice or fret, need not be considered in this connection, as

they practically have no splat at all. In this strong junction of the splat with the seat he is strictly conservative of the Queen Anne and early Georgian forms. In the shape of the splat he also very frequently adheres to the vase or baluster shape which I have before described, though he pierces it with great variety of patterns. Of the same seventy designs for chairs to which I have referred, nine or ten very distinctly recall the Queen Anne shape, in which the broadest part of the splat is in the upper third portion of the back, if we divide into three parts. A good many others approximate to it, and the conclusion therefore is, that neither in this particular, any more than in that of the 'Cupid's bow,' was he an originator. Where he deserves our great admiration is in his generally sure 'feeling' for the due proportion of the splat to the entire breadth of the chair-back. Many of the early eighteenth-century chairs are by no means happy in that respect. There is too frequently a broad, unpierced splat with a gaping space on each side of it; and each space is bounded by an inadequately thin upright. A proper sense of spacing, that all-important gift to a designer, was certainly one of Chippendale's great merits. We have to look long and closely amongst his chairs for a design which is unsatisfactory in this respect. Most of them are eminently successful in the harmony of the three upright parts which compose the chair-back. For the most part, in these splatted chairs the splat is divided from the side-pieces all the way from top to bottom. The exceptions are in the case of riband-backed chairs, in which the ends of the ribands join the side-pieces at about half-way; and in one or two other instances. The entirely open and empty space on each side of the splat may therefore be set down as another characteristic of Chippendale's manner.

Of that almost invariable shoulder-angle on the uprights of Queen Anne and early Georgian chairs,

Chippendale's show but faint traces. If any angle occurs, it is generally close to the seat, and often disguised by scroll or leaf ornament. The uprights of the earlier chairs are often so plain that the shoulder-angle is a very noticeable feature in the design. This feature does not seem to have commended itself to Chippendale, whose chairs are so much more ornamented as not to require a salient point on each side of the back as a constant factor.

For the decoration of his splats he is fond of trefoil or kidney-shaped openings. These last are formed by the juxtaposition of two C-curves thus, CↃ, and are found in the upper and lower parts of splats. Often they constitute quite a large opening in the centre of the splat, and are filled in with other shapes. The edges are generally moulded with a raised C-curve. This shape is as frequent in Chippendale as the S-curve upon the oak furniture of a previous epoch.

Besides the C-curve of which he makes such ample use, Chippendale has no stint of acanthus leafage creeping delicately along the top of the back or twisting itself up the sides. It is used to disguise the harsh angles which are so noticeable in the chairs of the generation before, and to render interesting the broad surface of the upper parts of cabriole legs. In his more obviously French-inspired patterns there is much use of rocaille work. The four elements, the C-curve, the acanthus leaf, the rocaille with its scallop edgings, and the riband, constitute the main ornaments of those chairs which we have been considering, and which are neither Chinese nor Gothic in style. The two last must be considered apart.

The precise dating of furniture is nearly always, as we have seen, a difficult one, and the task with Chippendale is not amongst the least precarious. The *Director* is our only definite evidence of what is typically Chippendale, but there can be no doubt as to his

having produced much furniture before he published his great book. The question is, how much or how little of the early eighteenth-century furniture came from his hand? It is easy for a writer to assign him a working life of thirty years or so before the publication of the *Director*, and allow him the orthodox early or transition period during which he may be supposed to have been responsible for some of the early Georgian vase or fiddle-backed chairs and settees. Then he might be allowed a middle period, and finally the date of the *Director* might be regarded as his epoch of culmination. Unfortunately, as to the first two portions of his life, we should be indulging in little more than guesswork. The *Director* itself will not always clear up doubts, for of the furniture represented therein, though some had no doubt been actually produced, of certain examples Chippendale remarks that he should have much pleasure in the execution of them. Little or no available evidence remains as to the exact date of any particular chair. One is reproduced by Miss Singleton in *The Furniture of our Forefathers* (vol. i. p. 274), as to which she states, on the authority of Professor Silliman, that it belonged to a set of ten imported into America by Sir W. Burnet in 1727. Now this chair has a Cupid's-bow back of the usual Chippendale type, and a rather remarkably light open-work splat. Nothing short of absolute documentary proof of the strictest kind would induce the present writer to accept the date attributed to it. The chair is one which is least likely to have been made in the third decade of the eighteenth century, when those with the round tops and the jutting shoulder-angle on the upright, to which attention was particularly drawn, were in fashion. As Miss Singleton gives us nothing except Professor Silliman's account, it seems rash to accept such a date for so slender a type of chair.

HOGARTH'S FURNITURE

It is natural to look for evidence of his work in the pictures of Hogarth, that acute observer, whose interiors were being painted in the debateable period, 1720-1760. The series in which we should most expect to find Chippendale furniture is 'Marriage à la Mode.' In the 'Contract' picture the chairs are upholstered in the French style, which might be anybody's. In the breakfast scene shortly after the marriage they are also upholstered, with round tops to the backs, and something in the nature of the familiar scallop-shell on the top of the cabriole legs. They have pad feet, and are of the clumsy type which we associate with Queen Anne and George I., and to which the card-tables shown in the background also belong. A tripod table close to the countess has feet with the convex and concave curves of the end of the seventeenth century, quite removed from any known manner of Chippendale. The round-topped upholstered back appears, it may be noted, in a French engraving of the same period, 'Les Rémois' —Contes de La Fontaine, by Nicholas Larmessin, after Lancret, 1738. In the death of the countess at her father's house in the city, the chairs are naturally more old-fashioned still, namely, leather-backed 'Cromwellian.' The 'Marriage à la Mode' series is supposed to date 1745. It is unsafe to draw inferences from the pictures of low life, but it may be observed that in one of the 'Rake's Progress,' 1735, the heir sits in a spiral-turned chair of the seventeenth century, whilst in 'Orgies' the chairs are plain leather-backed. In the Election series the dinner scene shows a chair with rounded top and a solid jar splat. In 'Chairing the Member,' the chair has spiral-turned uprights. In the portrait, engraved, of Hogarth sitting at his easel, the painter is seated on a very plain ungainly chair of the so-called Hogarth type, which is certainly not much in evidence in the other pictures. Nearest to what we know to be in Chippendale's manner is the tea-

table which is being kicked over in the second picture of the 'Harlot's Progress,' 1733-34. It has cabriole legs with projecting C-curves, and a border with scallop-shell corners.

It seems then that Hogarth, whom we may suppose, as the most observing pictorial satirist of the manners of his time, to have been acquainted with the latest fashions in furnishing, has little or nothing in his pictures which suggests an approach to the designs of the *Director*. That the subject of furniture was an interesting one to him may yet be inferred from the fact that he satirised Kent, the architect, who designed furniture amongst other things, and more conclusively from his having deliberately engraved many shapes of the cabriole leg in his famous 'Analysis of Beauty.' I think, then, that while recognising the probability that Chippendale had a transition period in which his work resembled the furniture gradually evolved from the Dutch manner of William III. and Anne, we must admit that we have little evidence of what he actually did, beyond what the *Director* and a few authenticated pieces, like the settee (Plate CII.2) made for the Bury family, afford us.

CHAPTER XVI

CHIPPENDALE: II—THE FRENCH, GOTHIC, AND CHINESE STYLES

IN Chippendale's first edition the French style may fairly be said to predominate, and it is probable that his earliest affections were centred upon the styles of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. The later manner is by far the most apparent in his work. There is very little of the massive dignity of the earlier king's style left in that of Chippendale. It is to be observed in the terminal-shaped legs of cabinets and sideboard tables, perhaps in certain clock-cases, and occasionally in alternative patterns for chair-legs. It does not amount to much. The rococo Louis XV. influence is, on the other hand, noticeable everywhere. It abounds in chairs and screens, girandoles and pier-glass frames, beds and commodes. We should remember that so far from denying that influence, Chippendale frankly describes his upholstered chairs as French chairs. Whether he meant by that to acknowledge a French inspiration is, of course, open to argument; but the complete resemblance of style to that from over the water would render a denial of foreign borrowing very difficult of acceptance. It is likely enough that he was ready to claim rather more as his own than the appearance of some of these things would warrant. When he remarks, 'in executing many of the drawings, my pencil has but faintly copied out these images that my fancy suggested,' it is charitable to suppose that he

was referring chiefly to those less ornate designs, in which he shows a sobriety more essentially English.

Chippendale, in a monumental style borrowed largely from French ornament, is well illustrated by the Master's chair of the Grocers' Company (Plate XCII. 1). This chair may date from about 1745, and is curiously overdone with ornament at the top, in proportion to the modesty of its legs and seat. It is interesting to compare it with the elegant mahogany china cabinet belonging to the late Mr. Henry Willett (Plate XC.), which is admirable in proportion, and as graceful as the Grocers' chair is pompous. Yet the same elements of decoration are to be found in the two. The rocaille work and curves which run round the upholstered back of the chair are used in a lighter, more irregular form on the panels of the lower part of the cabinet. For some reason this beautiful piece when exhibited was said to be by Adam. It is impossible, I think, to find anything amongst the original drawings of the Adam firm preserved in the Soane Museum, which has any resemblance to this design. In Chippendale's book, on the other hand, the pediment with swan neck disguised with leafage, and with a pedestal to support a bust, is found on a 'desk and bookcase,' which has carved flower ornament in similar style to that of Mr. Willett's china case. It also appears in a large library bookcase of Gothic design. Similar open lattice-work to that which fills in the swan necks and the flat bust shelf is found on the pediment of a long clock, and on a larger scale on that of a 'dressing chest and bookcase.' The outlying decorations of the canted corners are to be found on very many of Chippendale's French-influenced designs for commodes and clothes chests. All the elements of this cabinet, in fact, are such as he used, and though some may prefer to attribute it to the 'school' only of Chippendale, it certainly does not belong to that of

Adam. It is an example which either might have been proud to claim.

Greater interest attaches for most English students of furniture to the more English of Chippendale's inventions, and especially to the less grand open-backed mahogany chairs. Much time need not be spent upon the upholstered French chairs with Louis XV. lines and stuffed backs and seats. They are charming enough, but not sufficiently distinctive to flatter British pride. The same, indeed, may be said of the Chinese chairs, which were certainly not intended to betray a Western parentage. These, however, with the other Chinese manifestations, we cannot possibly ignore. There are too many in the first edition to be passed over in silence. Moreover, they deal so much in those wonderfully varied frets, of which Chippendale also made such frequent use in other kinds of furniture, that for these alone they are worth noticing. We may console ourselves for their ostentatious Orientalism by reflecting that it, to a large extent, saw the light no nearer to the East than St. Martin's Lane.

The first point to be noticed is that Chippendale's Chinese chair ignores the cabriole legs. The legs are for the most part plain uprights, or uprights pierced and fretted, with a pierced bracket sometimes at the junctions of the legs and seat. Upon reflection it seems rather curious that the cabriole leg should be thus avoided. Though we have before now traced it back to the Venetian convex and concave curve, and from thence to the fashions of ancient Rome, there is another source from which it may have come. That source is Oriental. Both China and Japan dealt in something very like the cabriole leg. We have only to look at their stands for vases executed in lacquer, or at the representations of the same upon their porcelain, to find that the cabriole leg is not the sole perquisite of Europe. I question whether its popularity with the

Dutch at the end of the seventeenth century had not at least something to do with its representations in the furniture and porcelain of the East.

However this may be, the cabriole leg is eschewed in Chippendale's Chinese chairs. There is perhaps another reason. On the whole, it is probable that the Chinese chair was a cheap chair. It was executed very often in beech-wood and painted, at least in the case of other makers, to imitate the colour of cane. The curved cabriole leg, or any other curve, as it requires more timber, would be a more expensive shape than the severe angulated patterns of which the Chinese manner was composed. There are, of course, instances showing a combination of French and Chinese, but even these will be found to have straight legs. The addition of the usual Cupid's-bow top of the back and curved arms forms the most ordinary admixture.

It is hardly necessary, or indeed possible, to describe the Chinese chair in its infinite variety of pattern. Sometimes the main outline of the back is plain rectangular. This severe outline may be varied at the top of the back by a piece in the centre, which is raised higher than the rest and partly curved. From this to the regular Cupid's-bow shape is a very easy transition, necessitating merely a couple of concave curves on each side instead of straight lines. The seats have either plain fronts or afford an opportunity for strap-work upon the solid, which is also extensively used to decorate the legs. Instead of the strap-work on the solid, the legs are often pierced so as to give an open fretted appearance, and in these cases there is generally a fretted open-work bracket, as I have already mentioned. When there are arms, they have often the curve which is found on Chippendale's English chair, and the space between the arm and the seat is filled in with a similar open-work pattern to that which forms the back. Occasionally there is a suggestion of a

terminal leg pierced, and reminiscent of Louis XIV. The leg-rails are as a rule designed plain, but in some cases there is a cross-piece from the two side-rails set well back under the seat, and this is in open work, as are also the side-rails to which it is attached. In another instance, all three rails are bow shaped and decorated, and of course the cross-piece is set back as before described, so as not to be endangered by the heels of the sitter. In all cases there is that fine sweeping concave curve of the chair-back, from its highest part to the bottom of the back legs, which is characteristic of this entire period, and differentiates it so much from the rigid upright backs of the old oak and the Charles II. epochs.

It must be confessed that of the Chinese chairs, those which are most reminiscent of window lattice-work are the least acceptable. That is perhaps because we associate these rectangular interlacing forms with glazing, and so find them more congruous to the doors of china cabinets and bookcases than to the backs of chairs. Some again are too suggestive of the conventional shape of a flash of lightning with their thin zigzag strips. As a general criticism upon these chairs, I may remark that, though the outer shape of the back is as thick and strong as in other chairs, the lattice filling-in usually gives the impression of being too thin and open to stand the pressure of the sitter's back. This fragility is probably much more apparent than real; but a thin design, even though it may not actually be weak, should not even be weak-looking. The same criticism may be made of many of the Heppelwhite and Sheraton chairs, though the writer has good reason to know that a very slender-looking Sheraton chair is not nearly so tender as might be imagined. In those cases, however, where Chippendale has varied the lattice with pagoda-roof and other wider shapes, the design may be generally said to be the better for it.

It may seem a considerable leap from the Chinese to the Gothic; but the truth is, that as Chippendale's Chinese was very much of St. Martin's Lane, so also is his Gothic. As the one comes from the same place as the other, the two are often mighty similar. Sometimes one may even be thankful to the designer that he has stated at the bottom of the page which is which. I have before me four 'chairs, Gothic design, showing various styles for legs.' What do I find? First, that the upright rectangular general shape of leg is to be considered quite as Gothic as it is Chinese. Secondly, that the terminal shape, reminiscent of Louis XIV., is to be taken as suitable for Chinese and also for Gothic. Thirdly, that the straight leg pierced with open work is equally applicable to chairs of Eastern or Western inspiration. Fourthly, that the C-curve and the rocaille work or coquillage, which is employed to vary the Chinese chair, is equally at home in the Gothic production. Fifthly, the thin latticed backs of so-called Gothic chairs are often nearly as angular in pattern as the Chinese lattice backs. The Gothic lattice, however, is made up of two contrasting motives, an angular straight-lined 'mesh' being intermingled with a curved mesh—formed, this last, of opposing C-curves, it may be. The only radical difference that I can discover between the general shape of the Chinese and Gothic chairs, is that in the former, as I have observed above, Chippendale does not allow himself a cabriole or curved leg. In the Gothic chair, that, and even rocaille work, is quite admissible, just as also in his upholstered 'French chairs' there is no harm apparently in using the straight leg and Chinese frets. The Chinese chair with raised centre-piece in the upper back-rail, has its counterpart in a Gothic chair with an extremely similar shape. In fact, we can predicate almost anything about either style. Only we must not go so far as to expect the cabriole leg and Gothic crockets and pinnacles upon

the Chinese chair. When we remind ourselves once more of the astonishing miscellany of the pavilions at Vauxhall, we must give Chippendale credit for having attained at least to this extent of purism, that he did not borrow his Chinese forms from some Gothic parish church. The converse proposition, I fear, we cannot sustain. His Gothic lattice too closely resembles Chippendale's Chinese inventions.

The Gothic taste—it never, perhaps, in the eighteenth century attained quite the dimensions of a craze—did not arrive so early as the Chinese. Evelyn had very little to say for it, but he was able to appreciate its merits. Of Haarlem, for instance, he says that the town possesses 'one of the fairest churches of the Gotiq design I had seene,' but when he arrives at Rome in 1644, the first thing he visits is the 'Palace Farnezi,' built 'when Architecture was but newly recovered from the Gotic barbarity.' As late as 1697 he complains of 'monkish piles without any just proportion, use, or beauty.' While allowing them a certain solidity, he objects to the multiplicity of detail, so confounding the sight 'that one cannot consider it with any steadiness.' Addison likewise in 1711 compares a certain class of writers who 'hunt after foreign Ornaments' to 'Goths in poetry, who, like those in Architecture, not being able to come up to the beautiful simplicity of the old Greeks and Romans, have endeavoured to supply its place with all the extravagancies of an irregular Fancy.' Speaking again of 'our general Taste in England for Epigrams, Turns of Wit, and forced conceits, . . . I have endeavoured,' he says, 'in several of my speculations to banish this Gothic Taste which has taken possession among us.' It is to be feared that his endeavours were not attended by much success, and if there is any truly existing connection between the tendencies of literature and those of art, Addison's words are symptomatic of a new departure in the

latter. Certainly the reawakened interest in Gothic architecture did not commence with Horace Walpole's building of Strawberry Hill. This he had not thought of till 1750, when, to judge from Chippendale's first edition, the fashion must have been fairly established in furniture. Batty Langley's *Principles of Gardening*, published in 1728, seems to show that the revival of a taste for Gothic architecture crept in through the use of sham ruins in gardens. In 1742 his *Ancient Architecture* gave 'a great variety of grand and useful designs entirely new in the Gothic mode for the ornamenting of buildings and gardens,' and Walpole employed him on Strawberry Hill, but never pretended that even between the two of them they had produced a genuine resuscitation.

There is great excuse, then, for Chippendale, if, as we have seen, his Gothic is so remarkably like his Chinese. It has this advantage over the latter, that there are more broad parts in the woodwork of the backs, and that consequently some Gothic chairs are less fragile-looking than the majority of the Chinese. There are instances, however, where in the use of very light and tapering crocketed pinnacles between a pair of ogival arches, the woodwork seems to run almost to nothing. This naturally occurs, it should be said, at the top of the back, where the strain would be the least. The wheel-back or rose-window-backed chair cannot be regarded as a happy invention, unless in the un-Gothic guise of the example on Plate C.2, and it is a relief to turn from chairs to other furniture, such as bookcases, where the Gothic style does not seem quite so out of place.

A good instance of the combination of French eighteenth-century, Gothic, and Chinese, is a cabinet set upon a console or base of four terminal legs. These are ornamented below with C-curves and acanthus leafage, exactly as might be found upon any

piece of French Louis xv. furniture. The framework below the top slab is decorated with strapwork cut on the solid, of a kind which might well be called Chinese. Only when we get to the lower part of the upper piece, or cabinet proper, do we find the Gothic element in an arcading of sixteen pointed arches, cusped, and with quatrefoils between. The higher we go, the more we return to France and China. Chippendale does not assign any particular inspiration to this cabinet, but another cabinet which is distinctly called Gothic, may well be compared with it. This is of the same general construction, and is actually much less Gothic-looking than the previous example. It rests on the same terminal legs, but this time they have a large pierced opening down the most of their length. The solid feet are worked with C-curves and acanthus. On the centre of the frame, below the top slab, is a large ornament such as Meissonier might have designed, except that it is symmetrical. Its Gothic claim is perhaps based on a quatrefoil opening in the middle. The top of the upper part rises in a sort of ogival arch very much disguised with French ornament, and at the two ends, where was an opportunity for Gothic pinnacles to save the character of the piece, Chippendale has gone out of his way to place finials of little vases containing naturalistic flowers exactly reminiscent of the Louis xv. ormolu. The main part of the front is festooned with naturalistic leaves and flowers. The only features which give this Gothic cabinet any claim to its title are two little recesses, one on each side of the top, each with a couple of quasi-ogival arches, and a single long slender piece of shafting on each side of the flower-bedecked central panel. In face of such a design, it is impossible to believe that the 'Gothic style' was much more than a label which Chippendale attached to his wares, just as a portmanteau-maker is accustomed to call a certain kind of leather bag a 'Gladstone.'

Two of Chippendale's designs for large bookcases make a greater show of Gothic work, chiefly by means of pinnacles at the top, but the central ornaments, most noticeable parts of the entire scheme, are deliberately French, or Gothic twisted most comically into Chinese by placing a pagoda top above a pseudo-ogival arch. Still it is in these large library bookcase designs that Chippendale's Gothic fantasias are least objectionable, and if he had never mentioned the word Gothic, we should be more free to admire the ingenuity with which he has made his *mélange* into an agreeable whole. The material in which they were to be executed so little recalls either the wood or the stone of Gothic architecture, that his forms might have passed without our noticing the ultimate source from which they were borrowed. His *clientèle* contained but few sticklers for purity of style, we may be sure. Indeed, it is not unlikely that the Gothic in furniture was at first only foisted upon the public by means of its studied approximation to the more familiar Chinese.

CHAPTER XVII

CHIPPENDALE: III

IT may be objected at this stage that in our treatment of earlier English furniture, criticisms and objections have been made only to a moderate extent, but that now Chippendale suffers from the lack of that former spirit of leniency. He does indeed incur the consequences of being regarded as a pioneer in the mahogany style of furniture, whose name and designs, moreover, are definitely known. In face of such a vast mass of anonymous work as the seventeenth century presents, work of which it is but rarely possible to ascribe more than one or two examples to one and the same hand, criticism in detail seems unprofitable. The lover of old oak furniture is less inclined to balance praise and blame, than to regard with appreciative toleration the naïve and rude workmanship of village tradition and village carpenters. While safeguarding ourselves from the attitude which accepts all things old and genuine as equally artistic, we are still inclined to be less exacting with the seventeenth century than with the eighteenth. The latter makes pretensions of which the former would never have dreamed. It is hardly likely that the early joiner, if he had ever published a pattern-book, would have troubled himself or his public with the 'five orders' or the rules of perspective. In his work, perhaps, he was more nearly akin to the architect than those later cabinetmakers of whom Batty Langley complained in

1740. In *The City and Country Builder's and Workmen's Treasury of Designs*, he speaks of 'the evil genius that so presides over cabinetmakers as to direct them to persevere in such a pertinacious and stupid manner that the rules of architecture, from whence all beautiful proportions are deduced, are unworthy of their regard.' To avoid this clumsily expressed accusation of being thus hag-ridden, the furniture-book makers perhaps committed themselves to their parade of architecture and perspective. These pretensions have brought the natural consequence of closer inquiry into their merits and defects. It is impossible to regard Chippendale in the same light as we view the village joiner. We are compelled to perceive that his designs include much that was extremely meretricious. Yet that need not blind us to the fact that he produced a great variety of furniture which is truly excellent in execution and truly charming in design. Even Sheraton, who, busied with his own claims, could not be expected to display enthusiasm for a forerunner, does Chippendale a certain justice. In *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing-Book*, though he says that Chippendale's designs are 'now wholly antiquated and laid aside,' he admits that they are 'possessed of great merit, according to the times in which they were executed.' He suspects that Manwaring copied his chairs from Chippendale, and as to the book of Ince and Mayhew, it was 'a book of merit in its day, though much inferior to Chippendale's, which was a real original, as well as more extensive and masterly in its designs.' Placed at a distance from both Chippendale and Sheraton, we are able to perceive that the reproach of being antiquated and old-fashioned depended only upon the passing fancy of the hour. We ourselves feel now the old-fashionedness of late Sheraton and early nineteenth-century furniture, which is also inherently bad; but the best of Chippendale's work, and

that of his successors, could only for a time be thrown aside. We have come back to the designs of all three of the great names of the eighteenth century cabinet-makers. We take delight in Chippendale, Heppelwhite, and Sheraton.

As to Chippendale's book being 'a real original,' we may agree to that also, if the phrase does not attribute to him an absolutely fresh invention. That may be taken as an impossibility for any one furniture artist to accomplish. The ideas of Chippendale are mostly based upon the old, with the addition of his own undoubted individuality. How strong that was may easily be discerned from the delightful furniture he has left behind him.

His chairs have been sufficiently discussed. The settee next claims our attention, because in so many cases it is practically but two or more chair-backs joined together. This is the case with a very fine example formerly in the possession of the late Mr. Henry Willett (Plate CII.1), in which no effort is made to disguise the derivation. There are two bowed tops and pierced and carved jar-shaped splats above a seat supported by six straight legs joined with straight rails. Some elegant strap-work on the solid runs along the front of the seat. The least satisfactory part of the design lies precisely in the junction of the two chair-backs, which is not in the least disguised or sophisticated. Between the two uprights, which are joined only at the top, is an opening not altogether graceful, but the natural consequence of so naïve a juxtaposition.

A more entirely satisfactory result is obtained when the only outer uprights remaining from the chair shapes are those at each end. The whole space between is then occupied only by splats. A most happy example (Plate CII.2) is to be found in a settee made for the Bury family, of Kateshill, Bewdley, and now the property of Mrs. Edmund McClure. This piece, which has but

four legs, the front ones being cabriole on claw and ball feet, has an upper back rail consisting of the usual bow shapes, but the awkward junction of the 'two-chair-back settee' is cleverly avoided in this four-splat back. There is half a chair's back at each end, with two centre-pieces which are merely splats with all the top rail to left and right cut off. The requisite connection with the ends is made by the substitution of bold C-curves with their bird-headed ends downwards, and resting upon the shoulders of the splats which they serve to bridge. All awkwardness has disappeared in this beautiful specimen of a settee. It seems curious that so clever a designer as Chippendale should not have foreseen the objections to the mere fitting together of two chair-backs, and have avoided it.

In sofas, as they have upholstered backs, Chippendale follows the French style very closely. The backs are waved in a bow shape, or consist of one long convex curve. The ends roll outwards so as often to show a decided C-curve above a cabriole leg. Of these there are generally four in front, the line of the seat being broken by the usual C-curves and 'coquillage.' Sometimes the legs are of a straighter Louis XIV. type, with a straight front to the seat. The severe lines may be broken by detached curves and festooned draperies carved in wood. 'When made large' (*i.e.* as much as ten feet long), Chippendale says, 'they have a bolster and pillows at each end, and cushions at the back, which may be laid down occasionally, and form a mattress. . . . Part of the carving may be left out if required.' One of the most elaborate of his sofa designs has a back tricked out with a large Cupid and a pair of eagles.

Couches he designed in similar style, with six or eight legs, but a back only at one end, the arms of which are either wood slightly upholstered or else entirely filled in like the back with stuffing. Some of his window seats are treated by Chippendale in much

the same manner. One lately in possession of Messrs. Gill and Reigate has cabriole legs, waved lines on the lower side of the front of the seat, and two plain stuffed ends which roll outwards. There are, of course, no arms.

It is said that Chippendale has left many of his screens behind him. These are either rectangular in outline or, especially if of French inspiration, irregularly shaped in the manner of Meissonier. The screen proper is, of course, attached immovably to the legs, and generally there is an opening in the top to serve as a lifting-handle. But there is an entirely different class of movable screen of a simpler kind. These are fastened with rings on a single pole supported upon a tripod. The legs are often of the same character as those of the tripod supper tables presently described, on a central pillar, and with pad, or lion's, or claw and ball feet. The largest part of the central pole just above the legs may be gadrooned, and on the legs there is, perhaps, a slight carving of acanthus leaves. This is the plainest type of mahogany tripod screen (Plate CIII.2). The screen itself usually approaches a rectangular shape, but more elaborate examples are shaped in the French manner, and have tripods much decorated with the usual French flowers and C-curves.

Allied to the tripod screen is the tripod lamp table, of which Sir C. G. E. Welby, Bart., possesses a graceful example. It has the plain legs described as being usual, but spreads upwards and outwards into a species of slender cage of open-work concave curves. The extreme top is octagonal, with an open fretwork bulwark. This is a very slender and elegant little 'gueridon.' Tea table stands are of the same tripod arrangement with fretwork tops. Similar objects are the stands for tiny wash-hand basins, which seem so inadequate to our modern requirements. The central pole makes way for three turned supports upon a

triangular platform, resting on the usual tripod legs. Halfway up is another tiny triangular platform, with perhaps a couple of small drawers. Another set of three uprights rests on this and supports a ring-opening for a china basin. Lord Barnard has at Raby Castle a stand which, instead of the basin-ring, is fitted with an octagonal table top, but all below is the same. Illustrated here is a four-legged specimen, the property of Mr. W. Wontner, 26 Edwardes Square, London, which with its fretted sides and shaped top is an excellent example (Plate CIV.2).

With some of these unambitious but typical pieces we have been led to anticipate an important category, that of tables, which includes many of the most delightful examples of Chippendale's genius.

To begin with the 'sideboard table,' this was his nearest approach to the sideboard as we know it. That, with its capacious drawers and cellarettes, was left for Sheraton to carry to the highest excellence. Chippendale's 'sideboard table' is simply a table upon four legs, and might be used for any ordinary purpose, unless it happens that the legs meant to be nearest the wall are less ornate than those in front, and that the strap-work on the frame below the top is only carried round three sides. The top slab is neatly moulded on the edge. The legs are upright and either 'hollow,' *i.e.* made of two ornamentally pierced planks set at an angle to give the outward appearance of rectangular legs, or else they are solid and bevelled off on the inside so as to make the same triangular shape as by the first method. There is often a bracket, carved and pierced, at the junction of leg and frame.

The richly carved table belonging to Mr. R. W. Partridge, which is illustrated here (Plate CVI.), with a large lion's head and 'swags' or festoons on either side of it, is a particularly fine example (see also Plate CV.).

'Writing tables' are treated much in the same way,

the chief difference being that they may have drawers in the frame. From these the step is short to the 'bureau table,' which corresponds very nearly with what we should now describe as a 'study table.' There is a knee-hole recess with drawers on one side, and a cupboard, perhaps, on the other. A long drawer takes up the whole of the framing, and the table rests on short shaped feet. These tables are either straight or with waved fronts. The 'library table' is not far removed from the last. The chief difference is that instead of a mere knee-hole recess, there is a wide opening between the two sets of drawers or cupboard and drawers, from front to back.

In his first edition Chippendale makes a great display of 'French commode tables.' These are mostly chests of drawers upon low cabriole legs. They have *bombé* and other shaped fronts, and vary considerably in elegance of design. Occasionally there is a cupboard front flanked by three or four small drawers round or concaved at each corner, but on the whole they are pretty closely modelled upon the French commode shape. The example illustrated, with gilt mouldings and well-carved cabriole legs, is the property of Mr. Henry Lowe, of Grantham (Plate CVII.). The most dainty of all are the little delicately made occasional tables, of which a good many remain. These are called china, breakfast, and supper tables, and so on, according to their purpose. A breakfast table has four legs and folding top with shaped edge. There is a single drawer in the frame, and the legs are braced by a strong X-shaped stretcher of half-inch mahogany shaped and pierced. The design for this in Chippendale's first edition has somewhat term-shaped legs and a species of claw and ball foot. Lord Barnard, Raby Castle, has one with tapering legs and pad feet. The example which is illustrated (Plate CX.) has straight legs with a pretty moulding running all

down their fronts. There is a C-curved bracket at the angle of leg and frame, and neat little brass drop handles to the drawer. It is a charming specimen of excellent unobtrusive design and workmanship. Another pattern has a rectangular top, no X-stretcher, but fretwork closing it in halfway down the legs.

More slender and delicate still are the china tables, or, as some now call them, tray tables, on account of the bulwark which runs round the top slab, ostensibly to prevent the china from slipping off, but also to provide an additional ornamental feature in the open fretwork composing its sides. Many of these tables are distinctly in the Chinese style. Their little thin legs, grouped in pairs or threes, sometimes imitate the joints of the bamboo (Plate CXI., 1 and 2). Other china tables are more French in design, with cabriole legs and elaborate X-stretchers curved and risen high to a finial in the centre. The Earl of Coventry possesses at Croome Court a table with these stretchers, but the legs in this instance are severely straight. Supper tables rest upon one central pillar branching into three legs, which end in claws or claw and ball. The tops of these are often variously shaped, and have a low moulding rising above the surface of the table to give a finish and protect the plates. There is a slight acanthus-leaf carving usually upon the upper curve of the S-shape legs. A table in the possession of the Earl of Dysart, Ham House, has a top mainly circular, but scalloped on the edge by projecting parts of eight circular places made to fit the plates. In the centre there is a circle for a large dish. Each of these places shows a part of its circumference on the edge of the main 'circle.' It is said that these tables are to be found with their china to match, but such survivals must be excessively rare. They were used for informal meals on returning from the play. Some have mainly square tops with a fretted edge.

Such tables appear to have been at one time painted, as we may conclude from a curious passage in J. T. Smith's *Nollekens and his Times* (vol. i. p. 255, edition 1829). Referring to a general improvement of taste, he speaks of those who in his boyish days were content to 'admire a bleeding-heart cherry painted upon a Pontipool tea-board, or a Tradescant strawberry upon a Dutch table,' and who 'now attentively look, and for a long time too, with the most awful respect at the majestic fragments of the Greek sculptor's art, so gloriously displayed in the Elgin Gallery.' To this he attaches a note: 'This description of [Dutch] table, the pride of our great-grandmothers, in which the brightest colours were most gorgeously displayed, was first imported from Holland into England in the reign of William and Mary. The top was nothing more than a large oval tea-tray, with a raised scalloped border round it, fixed upon a pillar, having a claw of three legs.'

Upon card tables Chippendale did not lay stress in his book. Specimens are found with straight legs moulded on the front in the same manner as the breakfast table illustrated, and with top edges carved with the egg and tongue ornament or similar patterns. An elaborate 'combination game table' I have seen had cabriole legs, acanthus-carved, and claw feet and a double top. Above was the regular baize-covered card table, with depressions for counters or money, and below this a chess table inlaid. A well below the double top contained a backgammon frame.

Apart from chairs in the Chinese style, Chippendale devoted his Oriental fancies, as was to be expected, to the designing of china cabinets and hanging shelves for china. The great feature of the former is the pagoda roof with its hollow triangular outline and projecting eaves from which hang little bells. There is, of course, great use of fretwork, and the legs on

which the cabinets stand are of the perpendicular kind as a rule, but sometimes recall the style of Louis XIV. Much flower-work, often twisting in wreaths round narrow uprights upon the fronts of cabinets, is purely French in treatment. Birds with long tails and beaks are sometimes perched on the eaves of pagoda roofs. The fine example illustrated is one of a pair in the possession of Sir Samuel Montague. It shows the pagodas, dragons, bells, and fretwork of the style to perfection, whilst a suspicion of Gothic work lurks on the frieze below the cornice (Plate CXII.).

Amongst the bed designs is one in which Chippendale, though he calls it a 'dome bed,' has more Chinese elements than in that which is called Chinese. The 'dome bed' has two dragons on the top similar to those which the younger Caffieri often used in his ormolu work. At the bed-head there is an elaborate pavilion decked with curves and foliage, in which is seated what may be taken for a figure of Buddha. The Chinese bed has a pagoda roof supported by posts, upon which appears the six-sided lattice to be found on Tudor bedposts and chimneys. The rest of the decoration is mainly French. Such Chinese vagaries as these were rarely, if ever, executed by Chippendale, and are less satisfactory than the simpler hanging shelves, in which a plain lattice forms the chief decoration. The same may be said of the console tables, or, as he calls them, 'frames for marble slabs,' in which amidst C-curves disguised with flowers and foliage are uncomfortably seated little Chinese figures. Grandiose and unsatisfactory, too, are Chippendale's Chinese sofas, in which a reasonable settee with waved or bowed back is over-topped by a heavy pagoda roof hung with draperies which are more suitable to the bed-head of a four-poster.

It is a relief to turn from these ill-advised monu-

ments to the more practical furniture which Chippendale made for the bedroom and the study. Here are indeed satisfactory examples of his work. He is not above showing plates of clothes-chests of the very plainest and most workmanlike description. These are a box above with a drawer below, like the first step in the evolution of the chest of drawers. The somewhat ornate example illustrated (Plate CVIII.) is communicated by Messrs. Barker and Co.

A mahogany 'tall-boy' chest of drawers from Chippendale's design is a most desirable possession. In his first edition they appear both extremely plain and also with ornamental legs and frets. These last run along architraves and between the upper and lower parts. They are found upon the blunted or canted corners with excellent effect, and also, on a smaller scale, run round the drawers. Sometimes the front consists of plain drawers. In the more ornate there are doors with fancy lattices similar to those of bookcases and china cabinets (Plate CIX.).

The bureau and bookcase, or 'desk and bookcase,' as he calls it, affords Chippendale an ample field for decoration. It is to be found with lion's feet or feet made of Louis XV. C-curves and 'coquillage.' It may be either plain drawer-fronted, or fitted with a knee-hole below its sloping top. Sometimes double doors take the place of the drawers. The design of Chippendale, which is before me, from the first edition, though decked out with French flower ornament, is in its general severity of shape a distinct reminiscence of the plainer furniture of the Queen Anne period. It has a broken swan-necked pediment finished with three busts. Its feet, too, are of the ogee moulded shape,[1] which belongs to that earlier time. In place of the pediment there is sometimes a pierced lattice rail at the top of the upper part, and in the design which shows this, the

[1] The 'scroll' foot.

lower rail between the feet is Cupid bow-shaped and decked with 'coquillage,' just sufficient to break successfully the strict perpendicular lines of the piece.

The cornices of the plainer furniture are often very happy in proportion. Small denticulations, combined with straps on the solid, are the chief ingredients of the cornice of the tall-boy (illustrated on Plate CIX.) in the possession of Mr. Arthur Edwards, 61 Wigmore Street. Nothing could have been better considered.

Though it is necessary to condemn most of Chippendale's elaborate designs for Chinese and Gothic beds, there is a saving grace to be found in his simpler four-posters. Of these the pillars are often extremely graceful. Sometimes they are reeded and crossed with ribbons, sometimes they are twined round with continuous ribbons and scrolls. Less attractive are those which imitate the slender shafts of Gothic architecture, and were calculated to give the occupant of a bed the impression that he was camping in a cathedral. Vast numbers of these pillars of four-posters, which have been destroyed, are now serving the purposes of lamp and fern stands. The cornices of these beds are sometimes in open pierced work, as is the case with a specimen at present in the possession of Mr. R. W. Partridge, 19 St. James Street. The main cornice ornaments are of upstanding acanthus-leaf shape. The pillars are fluted, and the hangings, of crimson and white in broad stripes, still remain. The Victoria and Albert Museum possesses a fair specimen. It would be difficult to surpass that which is illustrated here, with its elegant pierced top, embroidered hangings, and fluted and acanthus-carved pillars, from a photograph communicated by Messrs. Waring (Plate CXIV.). Such beds as these are far more satisfactory than the design for a state-bed with gadrooned dome surrounded with amorini, eagles, and doves, and topped by Venus, Cupid, and a lion upon clouds, which Chippendale submits 'to the judicious

and candid for their approbation; and there are found Magnificence, Proportion, and Harmony. . . . A Workman of genius will easily comprehend the Design. But I would advise him, in order to prevent mistakes, to make first a model of the same at large, which will save both time and expense.' There is no record of this fifteen-foot monument ever having been ventured upon.

Two classes of objects remain to be considered which are of importance to the subject—long clocks and mirrors. To both of these Chippendale devotes many designs, and to the latter most naturally, as became the son of a mirror-frame carver (Plate CXV.). Unfortunately, in his mirrors Chippendale runs to the extreme of French rocaille work. We find over and over again the long-beaked bird, the Chinese figure, and the C-curve dropping water. There are fragile and outlying leaves and flowers which seem almost, if not entirely, impossible of execution. The bird is bigger than the tree upon which he perches, and in one case hugely outspans the maiden crossing a bridge which is thrown across the lake of plate-glass. Sophisticated ruins, consisting of a column or two, appear on his girandoles, and it is difficult to find anything simple in these, or any of his frames. Those for pictures deal much in trophies of war, music, and the chase, and are borrowed somewhat from the grandiose style of Charles Lebrun, Louis XIV.'s director of art. A favourite combination is that of a chimneypiece with cabriole side uprights, and upper part with oval-shaped glass. Most of these designs run riot to such an extent with their multiplicity of ornament, that the eye and the mind refuse to dwell upon them with contentment. To them might precisely be applied the criticism which Evelyn, in a carping mood, expressed of Gothic architecture. We are better able to appreciate Chippendale's skill in the French style if we consider it as exemplified in the smallest and simplest articles which he drew. Many of

his little wall-brackets are very charming, especially those which are most symmetrical. Their main outline is triangular—the apex, of course, beneath—and their details may consist of a pair of winged cherubs with fish-tail extremities intertwined, or a couple of grotesque eagle-like heads as the tops of long C-curves which are joined at the bottom. Two pretty fancies are to be seen in a satyr peeping through somewhat irregular C-curves and coquillage, and a long-tailed dragon flying through an opening similarly composed, but rather more symmetrical.

In his clocks Chippendale is, on the whole, not so fantastic. The limitations of the long-clock shape partly account for this, and also, perhaps, the fact that he borrowed somewhat from Daniel Marot, a designer of a severer epoch. Yet some of the drawings are sufficiently flamboyant, notably that of a clock surmounted by an extremely aggressive Gallic cock. Much more suitable to English ideas and English rooms are two excellent designs from the first edition. The summit of the first is Chinese in style, it is true, but only to the extent of having a pagoda top. All below is comparatively simple. The opening for the clock face is straight-sided, with a semi-circular top supported by slender pillars. The long case is plain in front and slightly tapering as it descends, with blunted or splayed corners, and there are admirably proportioned mouldings above an upright plinth. Little fault can be found with the general appearance of this design. Pillars of some sort, often plain, except for flutes, are generally a feature of the clock face, and brass finials of the ball and spike shape are common for a finish of the summit (Plate CXVI.). Bracket- or table-clocks are hardly of sufficient size to be considered germane to our subject. Briefly, it may be said that Chippendale's bracket-clock is simply the first without the long case and plinth. Generally the face-opening is a plain semi-circular arch

springing at once from the sides, whereas in the tall clocks the semi-circle does not cover the entire span. The pediment, having no large and distant plinth to balance, is reduced in size, a fact which argues a nice appreciation in Chippendale of the laws of proportion. A common designer might easily omit to consider this point, and a plagiarist might fit the pediment of a long- to a bracket-clock without any sense of impropriety. Inattention to such particulars as this might account for the extraordinary want of harmony between the parts, noticeable in so many of the ordinary long-clocks which have come down to us.

The demand for lighter, more elegant furniture, which, as we have seen, has been, and will remain to the end of this narrative, the rule of evolution, was admirably met by the introduction of mahogany. Forests untouched were ready to hand giving the eighteenth-century joiners an advantage over their later rivals. The tree is a slow grower, and the inroads made upon the supply are difficult to repair, when two hundred years are required to bring the tree to perfection. Though there are many attractive exotic woods, there is none which can be obtained at once of such size, such a warm glow of colour and interest of grain. It is scarcely a cause for wonder that the prosaic nineteenth century should have been content with mahogany almost entirely unadorned, or that some of its clumsiest inventions are almost redeemed by their splendid material. But Chippendale was not satisfied with the mere natural beauty of mahogany. He did justice to its merits by the conscientiousness of his constructions. His frets were no mere pierced planks, but consisted of several thicknesses glued together in different ways of the grain, until the result was ornament capable of withstanding climatic changes and the effects of time to an astonishing extent. Further, his best carving was admirably suited to the material. It is not the heavy

grandiose chairs with rams' horn ends to their bowed backs, and profuse decoration elsewhere, to which we look for his standard of excellence; any more than we judge him by the extravagances of his merely contemplated and probably never executed bedsteads. The best of Chippendale, as is so often the case with masters in other branches of art, is found in those examples which are most national, and in which the artist has kept a reserve of force. Admirable contrasts are found in the smooth lengths of pleasantly beaded legs and backs of chairs varied at their ends by light and crisply cut foliage, the very scantiness of which lends it artistic value. If he uses 'rocaille' work, or 'coquillage,' the best examples are those in which it shows least above the edges. When the 'rocaille' work is too much in evidence it disturbs the easy sweeping lines of the general scheme, and makes the top of a riband-backed chair, for instance, look as if it were composed of the vertebræ of some animal. Those rare examples in which the splat is joined to the side uprights by other curves which make the entire back one arabesque, are to be deprecated for the same reasons. The four or five places where the curve ends touch the typical smooth side of the back, tend to make the chair too 'busy' in appearance. An excessive use of fretwork is also not to be desired upon the heavier furniture. It is as out of place as it appears to be upon those too florid Flemish oak court cupboards or cabinets which sometimes are mistaken for English. In the very light occasional tables, on the other hand, Chippendale's fretwork seems an altogether desirable feature. For the heavy arm-chair, unambitious, and with straight legs, nothing is more suitable than the undecorated moulding running along its entire length.

It is, however, not necessary to spend time upon what is largely matter of opinion. Riband chairs, Chinese, French, and English style chairs, the various

types of tables and screens which he has left us, will all have their admirers. What has been said is sufficient to indicate that the ratio of our admiration may often vary inversely as the ratio of the artist's exuberance. *Nil admirari* is a bad principle for critics, but *nimium* is undesirable also, where the design oversteps the limits of modesty.

Of Chippendale's furniture in French style, and of many of his great beds, it is necessary to say that much was intended to be gilt. His chimneypieces were, if gilt, executed in pine, as were also the elaborate mirrors and girandoles. Some of the gilding was burnished for brilliancy of effect. Upholstery—most used in the so-called French chairs—might be of worsted work with flowers or figure or conventional designs; but tapestry, damask, and especially red morocco, were also employed. Brass nails set close gave a touch of glitter to the dark wood, unless mouldings were used to hold the stuff. Where the upholstery is fixed by brass-headed nails, the close-set line of studs runs along the lower edge of the seat.

CHAPTER XVIII

MANWARING, INCE AND MAYHEW, THE ADAMS

IT is more than probable that furniture attributed to Chippendale should in many cases be laid to the credit of lesser men, such as Ince and Mayhew or Robert Manwaring. The latter's books, as well as that of Ince and Mayhew, enjoyed a vogue which called for more than one edition. It is only reasonable, therefore, to consider that some at least of these men's designs, when executed, resulted in tolerably good furniture, though we must admit that Manwaring was one of those men who do not seem to be aware when they have perpetrated a monstrosity. To some of these I shall refer in a short account of his books.

That for which Manwaring is entirely responsible is a thin octavo called *The Cabinet and Chair Maker's Real Friend and Companion, or the Whole System of Chair-making made plain and easy*, etc. A long paragraph follows, ending with the words, 'the whole invented and drawn by Robert Manwaring, Cabinet Maker, and beautifully and correctly engraved on 40 copper plates by Robert Prankes, London. Printed for Henry Webley in Holborn, near Chancery Lane, 1765. Price Ten Shillings sewed; Eleven Shillings and Six Pence bound.' The aforesaid long paragraph gives a foretaste of some of Manwaring's vagaries. 'Very rich and elegant rural chairs for Summer Houses, finely ornamented with Carvings, Fountains, and beautiful Landscapes, with the Shepherd and his Flock,

Reaper and Binders of Corn, Rock work, etc. Also some very beautiful Designs supposed to be executed with the limbs of Yew, Apple or Pear Trees, ornamented with Leaves and Blossoms which if properly painted will appear like Nature. These are the only Designs of the kind that ever were published. . . .'

In the preface Manwaring mentions the Five Orders of Architecture, which he lugs in because Chippendale, whom he describes as 'a late very ingenious Author,' had done it before him. 'I have made it my particular study,' he observes, 'to invent such Designs as may be easily executed by the hands of a tolerable skilful workman; if any of them should at any time be thought impracticable, I shall always be ready to set in a clear light any objection that may appear to be reasonable and rational.' Mr. Manwaring, that is, has no objection to be judge in his own case if any one hints that the rural chairs are impossible and absurd.

'The Hall, Gothic, and Chinese Chairs,' he continues, 'though they appear so very elegant and superb, are upon a simple construction, and may be very easily executed.' As to many of the other designs, 'the Author has the Boldness to assert that should the ornamental parts be left out there will still remain Grandeur and Magnificence behind, and the Design will appear open and genteel.' It is a little difficult to see what the 'ornamental parts' were intended to do, if even without them there still remained 'grandeur and magnificence behind.' I have also no opinion to offer as to the precise meaning of a combination of 'openness and gentility.'

The Five Orders come first, and take up about seven pages. After them follows 'the true Method of striking out all kind of Bevel Work for Chairs by Strait lines as explained in the Plate next following the Five Orders.' Plates 1-3, hall chairs, some with acanthus-

leaf backs carved and pierced in the Dutch style of 1690 *circa*, and one with a huge scallop-shell back, are conclusive proof that not everything was borrowed, as some writers would have us believe, by Manwaring from Chippendale, though the following plates, 4-9, are certainly in the ordinary Chippendale style. These are followed by Chinese and Gothic chairs, 'Dressing chairs' in Louis XV. style, and 'Grand French Settees,' these last all with carved and pierced acanthus leafage. Plates 24-28 contain the rural chairs. One is in a rococo style with flowers and landscapes carved on it. Another has rockwork with a waterfall in the back—than which absurdity of design can no further go, unless perhaps in the next, where a fountain spouts up instead of a cascade falling down. Amongst the garden seats or settees is one with a back consisting of five uprights with wreaths hanging straight down between. Along the front rail are 'swags' of flowers. There are three rectangular legs in front with wreaths upon them. This is a by no means ugly design, and as far as I am aware is Manwaring's own. It is followed by another quite respectable garden seat in lattice-work and C-curves. The rest of the plates are chair backs, including one riband back in the Chippendale style.

On the whole this is Manwaring's best work; the rustic chairs are perfectly impossible, but many of the others are not to be despised. His perspective and leg drawing are bad.

The next year, 1766, saw *The Chair-Maker's Guide* published. This also is an octavo book, not to be compared in style or sumptuousness with the folios of Chippendale or Ince and Mayhew. There is no preface. The author has put himself at a disadvantage through his economisation of space. It is impossible to judge fairly of the designs, as they stand, because they are so much mixed. Half of one design for a

chair is attached to half of another, and the left hand leg being different from the right gives an unpleasant sense of lop-sidedness. We can get no just conception of any one chair, and economy has ruined the effect of the book. Manwaring would have said that it was meant for the practical use of the chair-maker, who would draw out a complete design for himself, but the particular copy to which I refer in the Victoria and Albert Museum happens to have the book-plate of 'Mr. Horatio Walpole,' one of the chief arbiters of taste and amateurs of the period.

Not till we come to Plate 21 do we find designs of which we can tolerably well judge, in the shape of a pair of very reasonably formed Chinese-French chairs with arms. There is to be noticed a certain thickness and clumsiness about Manwaring's pierced chair-splats in many cases. From Plate 28 we gather that he uses the term 'Back-stool' to designate an armless upholstered chair. On Plate 29 is a dreadful Gothic pair, with inordinately thin work all over their backs, but two hall chairs on Plate 33 are perhaps most extraordinary in proportion and detail. The back of one is simply a huge architectural volute adorned with foliage. There follows a succession of about twenty plates mostly of hall, or parlour, or bedchamber chairs, which are simply grotesque. Their characteristic is that the backs are so huge and the legs so short that there is no proportion between the two parts. Corrected in this respect it is not improbable that some of them made fairly good chairs, as there seems in spite of all drawbacks to have been a demand for Manwaring's designs. This is perhaps to be attributed to the comparative cheapness of his books. Such tall folios as those of Chippendale were not to be bought by every country cabinetmaker. However this may be, Manwaring's plates of chairs in *The Chair-Maker's Guide* reappear in *Genteel Household Fur-*

niture in the Present Taste . . . by a Society of Upholsterers, Cabinet-Makers, etc.' Of this there are four parts, each of which has for title, 'Upwards of one Hundred New and Genteel Designs, Being all the most approved Patterns of Household Furniture. . . .' In the second edition the first twenty-eight plates are these chairs of Manwaring, after which come some very respectable slab-tables, library, dressing, and toilet, card and 'claw,' writing and sideboard tables, all in the manner called after Chippendale. All these, Plates 29-41, if executed and still existing, would be ascribed to Chippendale without misgiving by their owners, unless they happened to refer to the book from which they come, and would not be worse furniture designs than some of those to which Chippendale has put his name. Some, indeed, of the scrolls and curves on cabinets and clothes-presses, as in Plate 44, are rather heavy, but Plate 48 shows a really pretty and well-proportioned china-shelf design. There are some unassuming 'Pediment Bookcases' which are occasionally somewhat spoilt by cushion-moulded friezes (cf. Plate 67), but an 'open Pediment Bureau and Bookcase' on Plate 70 is very good. Part three is chiefly concerned with lanterns and 'Corniches,' stands and beds, terms, pedestals, trays, and chimneypiece decorations of French-Chinese style. The last part shows grates, frets, fenders, balconies, door tops, and signboard irons which are often excellent. It seems very evident that several different hands were engaged upon the designs for this book, which varies so much in merit.

The large folio of Ince and Mayhew shows an interesting difference from the other furniture-books. It is addressed to a French public as well as an English. There is a double title-page, one in French

printed in reddish brown, the other English and printed in black. There are two different designs of an elaborate rococo character. The French title has at bottom, 'Par Ince & Mayhew. Ebénistes et Tapisseurs dans Broad Street près de Golden Square à Londres.' There is no date, and the dedication is to George Spencer, Duke of Marlborough: 'May it please your Grace, Being sensible of your Grace's extensive Knowledge in the Arts and Sciences, but more particularly in drawing, and your being ever willing to promote and encourage Industry and Ingenuity, will justly account for our presumption in claiming the protection of so worthy a Patron to this Work, which if so fortunate as to merit your Grace's approbation will be esteem'd as the greatest Honour ever conferred on your Grace's most Respectful most Obedient and very faithful Serv^ts^, Mayhew & Ince.'

The grammar and diction are decidedly unworthy of the style in which the book has been produced. The Preface opens: 'Prefaces, like Titles, are only meant as an Argument to the Reader, but when too long grow tedious, and are seldom read half through; to prevent which shall be concise, and only say that the very few Publications that has been produced of this Nature, with many Intreaties of our several Friends, induced us to compile the following Designs tho' not without much controversy in our own Opinions; as Effects of this Nature are ever Suffrages of Public Criticism, especially among the Degree of those Artists which the subject tends to: But with respect to the judicious part of mankind we are certain they are ever friends to the Industrious, and their candour will at least, if not look over, excuse those Faults which can only be attributed to the early endeavours of such an Undertaking.' This first paragraph of the preface should be a sufficient example of the curiously involved literary style of Ince and Mayhew.

The descriptions of the plates, ninety-five in all, are given both in French and English in parallel columns. The first three plates contain detail ornament, one of which, a good French scroll, is called 'a systematical Order of Raffle Leaf from the Line of Beauty,' whatever that may imply. There may be some reference to Hogarth's views upon the beautiful. On Plate 4 are three very bad hall chairs, but Plates 9 and 10 contain examples of which Chippendale need not have been ashamed. Their sideboard tables (Plates 11 and 12) are also in his style. Claw tables (Plate 13), *i.e.* pillar and tripod tables, are rather elaborately French, whilst what they describe (Plate 15) as 'Voiders' are trays with shapes somewhat reminiscent of tambourines. There are good bureau bookcases on Plates 16-18, but some others (Plates 19-21) show clumsy-looking glazing shapes. An object in the Chinese style on Plate 21 is entitled a 'Gentleman's Repository.' This is only another name for a secrétaire. Various tables and beds, not more extravagant than Chippendale's, take us up to Plate 33, which has three really pretty little bedroom tables with tray tops and pierced sides. Plate 37 is a 'Lady's Toilette,' an arrangement of a glass on a table with drapery elaborately festooned and flounced. Above the glass is a 'dish-clout' drapery supported by ropes in elegant knots looped round flying doves. The whole is impossible of execution. In contrast with this absurdity we have in the next plate two ladies' dressing-tables which are quite pretty, and fitted as to their interiors like those of Shearer. Ince and Mayhew do not excel in 'what-nots,' which they call 'ecoineurs.' These (Plate 47) are corner objects with a cupboard below, and four or five shelves above, the smallest at the top, and all made up of spindly C-curves. On Plates 55 and 56 they give what Chippendale calls a 'French chair,' but Manwaring and Ince and Mayhew a 'Back stool.' If it has arms as in Plate 58, and is

upholstered on seat and back, it then becomes with them also a 'French Chair.' What they call 'Burjairs,' Plate 60, which are short couches, are truly ugly; and in Plate 63, 'Un grand sofa' is a sofa in a niche, draped, Gothic, and silly. 'Illuminaries,' Plate 71, are small lights of a rococo kind. Wherever they give figures, as in 'slab' table frames (Plates 73-75) or, as we should call them, console tables, there is weakness of drawing and design. The rest of the work consists chiefly of grates, picture-frames, and chimneypieces, and the general impression which remains with us is that a good number of these designs would have looked well enough if they were executed.

The names of these men, Manwaring and Ince and Mayhew, have survived largely because they wrote books; but there were others equally prosperous in their day whose merits, though in their own estimation very likely as great, have been obscured. J. T. Smith in *Nollekens and his Times*, vol. ii. p. 243, second edition 1829, mentions No. 72 Long-acre as having formed 'a small part of the extensive premises formerly occupied by that singularly haughty character Cobb, the Upholsterer.' Cobb 'was perhaps one of the proudest men in England, and always appeared in full dress of the most superb and costly kind, in which state he would strut through his workshop, giving orders to his men. He was the person who brought that very convenient table into fashion that draws out in front, with upper and inward rising desks, so healthy for those who stand to write, read, or draw. The late king frequently employed him, and often smiled at his pomposity.' Perhaps Cobb's demeanour was in part put on by policy. The cult of the minor arts was scarcely recognised in those days when Miss Laetitia Hawkins, in her reminiscences of Steevens, the Shakespeare commentator, cast the reproach at him, that 'with the most manly sense of the sublime and

beautiful, he could yet panegyrise the delicacy of furniture!'

It is impossible to find quite the same personal interest in the designs of the Adam brothers as we do in those of Chippendale or even of the much-abused Manwaring. In the first place, they were not one man, but a firm of brothers helped by numerous clever draughtsmen and painters, such as Pergolesi, Zucchi, A.R.A., and Angelica Kauffmann, R.A., his wife. Secondly, the style they adopted was a classical one, ringing perpetual changes upon a few motives, and though full of elegance and lightness, was un-English and lacking in familiar charm. Thirdly, they did not make the furniture which they designed. Yet their influence upon the cabinetmakers must have been great, and the moving spirit, Robert Adam, was a man whose name counts for much in the history of English furniture. We shall find presently that he made himself responsible for things great and little. He would design a nobleman's house, with its interior decorations, its carpets, its beds and cabinets, down to sauce-boats and counterpanes and work-bags; and upon all these various things he laid the impress of an all-pervading classical style.

Robert Adam was the second of four brothers, John, Robert, James, and William, whose relationship is commemorated in the name of the Adelphi, which they built upon the banks of the Thames. Their father was a well known Edinburgh architect. Robert Adam was born in 1728. In 1754 he visited Italy in company with Clérisseau, the French architect, whose clever drawings of classical ruins in 'gouache' are well known to connoisseurs. Adam made a special study of the palace of Diocletian at Spalato, in Dalmatia. His

journal was printed in the *Library of Fine Arts*. In 1764 Adam published a folio volume with engravings by Bartolozzi of his Dalmatian drawings. His object in selecting this ruin was to introduce a classical building of a residential kind to the English public, whose knowledge of classical architecture, so far as it went, was derived exclusively from the remains of public buildings. In 1762 Adam was made architect to the King and Queen, and in 1768 he became Member of Parliament for Kinross-shire. The Adelphi was built in 1769. The remaining chief architectural works of Robert and James Adam (the other two, of whom William died in 1748, were not distinguished) are Caenwood, near Hampstead; Osterley, near Brentford; Shelburne, now Lansdowne House, in Berkeley Square; Luton House, Bedfordshire. In Portland Place, Stratford Place, Hamilton Place, and the south and east sides of Fitzroy Square their hand is very much in evidence. No. 25 Portland Place was built and fitted for Robert Adam's private use. They are responsible for the introduction of stucco to cover brick houses, but they at least deserve the credit for having made an artistic employment of it, very dissimilar to its effect in the South Kensington era of thirty or forty years ago. Fergusson ranks their classical knowledge below that of Sir W. Chambers, but if it was shallower it was more graceful. In 1773 Robert and James began to publish their *Works in Architecture* in folio parts at intervals till 1783. In 1822 the work was completed by a posthumous volume. A considerable number of furniture designs was included. Robert must have been a capable artist, as he obtained some reputation as a landscape painter. He died in 1792, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. James, whose work is not to be differentiated from that of his brother, but who is credited with the design of Portland Place, died in 1794, having succeeded his brother as King's archi-

tect. For some of these particulars I am indebted to the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

The original designs of the firm of Robert and James Adam are preserved in the Soane Museum. There are thirty volumes, three of which have to do with furniture. One, entitled *Furniture, Grates, Carpets, etc.*, contains 26 tables, 19 slabs, 8 commodes, 4 terms, 5 tripods, 17 sofas, 1 stool, 1 wine-cistern, 8 sideboards, 10 fire-screens, 16 chairs, 7 bookcases, 12 beds, 2 presses, and 4 cabinets. Besides these there are 44 carpet designs, 1 counterpane, 18 grates and stoves, 15 curtain cornices, 3 chimney-boards—the whole comprising 224 designs.

Another volume, which shows the versatile practice of these architects, is entitled *Musical Instruments, Brackets, Brasswork and Plate*. It contains 19 organ cases, 8 brackets, 10 clock cases, 37 metal-work designs, 59 plates and vases, and 94 miscellaneous. A third volume, of *Looking-Glasses and Girandoles*, contains 259 drawings of glasses and frames.

The chief activity of the Adams and their clever coadjutors seems to have endured from about the year 1764 to 1784. In the former year the Earl of Coventry orders from them most elaborate gilt 'cloaths presses.' In September 1768 we have the first mention of their constant patron Robert Child, who commissions a cabinet in a very light classical style, with bell-flower dropping wreaths, honeysuckle or anthemion patterns, probably in composition, with wirework stiffening on the top, and vases with wired flowers on the lower shelf. A sideboard has four brass upright baluster-rails, with an open honeysuckle border at the top. In February 1769 there is evidence of the 'Chinese craze' affecting the Adams and their designers. A painted wall decoration has for its central subject a slight open temple with a smoking urn. So far their customary classical note predominates, but in the pediment there is a landscape with a pagoda, supported by two Chinese

figures with the usual conical hats. There are also bells and umbrella shapes such as were the ordinary Chinese stock-in-trade. In 1771 we meet with a 'Design for a Cabinet for Her Grace the Duchess of Manchester, made to receive eleven pieces of Scagliola Landskips; the parts shaded yellow show what may be gilt or done in brass in ormoulu. The plain parts may be executed in woods of various kinds.' It may be remarked that the designs, though competently executed, have no colour merits to commend them. Gilt-work is invariably indicated by gamboge, and what might have been very beautiful original drawings have suffered from the want of truth in colour.

In 1772 we come across the lyre shape in a 'girandole' for George Keats, Esq., and there is another design for a lyre-back chair, with the top of the back decidedly Chippendalean in shape, for Mr. Robert Child. It is obvious that the lyre motive was borrowed from France by more than one designer. It is not the special perquisite of Sheraton, as from a chair in the Victoria and Albert Museum, attributed to him, we might be led to suppose. It seems very probable that another set of lyre-back chairs, one of which is illustrated in this volume (Plate CXXI.), from the collection of Mr. Augustus Spencer, may be due to the Adams. I find also in the *Autobiography* of Leslie the painter, p. 250, a reference to a set of lyre-back chairs. 'Mr. Sockett' (rector of Petworth) 'had a set of chairs which had belonged to Hayley' (the poet). 'They are of carved mahogany and designed by Flaxman. The centre of every back is a lyre.'

In the same year, 1772, there was designed a gorgeous bed for the Right Hon. Fred Thynne, all gilt, with urns, the anthemion and the short upright flute; and in January 1773 a 'sopha' for the Duke of Bolton, in the style known to us as Louis XVI., with swags, medallions, and turned and fluted legs.

Louis XVI. did not come to the throne till 1774, so that, allowing time for new French fashions to come to England, we may conclude that the style of Louis XVI. was well in vogue before the death of his predecessor. The appearance of these grand gilt beds may be judged of from that of Queen Charlotte, which is in white and gilt, a canopied four-poster with fine embroidered curtains, at Hampton Court Palace.

In 1775 we find a most ornate bed, and a 'counterpane' in 1776, 'for the bed at Osterley' for Mr. Robert Child. He keeps the Adams busy during these years with a work-bag for Mrs. Child of realistic flowers embroidered in a Greek vase, a fire-screen of the same design, and a tripod pole-screen in a Greek design, for the same lady. When commissioned to make an excursion into other styles, the Adams do not seem to have been comfortable unless they clung to at least a little of their classic ornament. The combination, as in the realistic flowers of the work-bag in their Greek vase, and in the wall decoration before-mentioned of mixed Chinese and classical motives, is evidence of an amusingly compliant, if scarcely correct, attitude.

In 1777 were designed gilt oval-backed chairs with sphinxes, which show that the Empire style had not the monopoly of that most frigid of all ornamental shapes. In 1778 it is the fashion to have a gilt mirror over a white painted commode, with gilt mouldings and lock furniture, and coloured urns and wreaths in green, blue, and crimson. This was for Sir John Griffin; while a picture-frame with a warlike trophy, consisting of a cannon, anchor, sail, spears, mace, and oars about a wreath with a shield centre dated July 28, 1779, is for Sir Abraham Hume.

We get some notion of the cost of these various objects, and of the reluctance of some clients to pay more than they were obliged, by occasional annexed estimates. A comparatively plain large glass in three

compartments, with a classic frieze, containing figure subjects in grisaille on a dark green ground, and framing of light green, is for the 'one pair of stairs room at Mr. Weaver's.' Mr. Featham's (*sic*?) estimate on May 19, 1783, for this is:—Glass, £10, 15s.; frame, £5; painting, £1; ornament painting, £5, 5s.—total, £22. The size was about 6 feet high by 4½ feet across. Mr. Weaver appears to have objected, for on July 21st there appears another estimate of £21, 5s. 6d., which was a reduction not much calculated to satisfy a client. This was a small affair. For a pair of large pier-glasses for John Kenrick, Esq., with oval paintings in colour at the top, with sphinxes, urns, rams' heads, etc., 8 feet high by 4 feet broad, the price is £120. More elaborate alternatives cost £160 the pair, at the same date, October 1783.

The enterprising patron of engravers, Mr. Alderman Boydell, has two designs made for picture-frames before he is satisfied, the second of which, contrary to the usual practice, is signed by Robert Adam, 1784, and is superior to the first. A month or two later, in June 1784, the same client has a very large screen design made with an artistic trophy of palettes and brushes, and oval and circular mirrors, held up by swags and French bows. Below are empty squares and oblongs, presumably for pictures. The size of this is 18 feet across by 20 feet high. Gothic designs sometimes occur. There is one for a pulpit and sounding-board, with very elaborate crockets and pinnacles, but it has no date or assignation, and several chimneypieces, one of which was for Alnwick Castle. The cabriole leg is not of frequent occurrence, but a sofa for Sir Laurence Dundas, though otherwise classical in pattern, is designed with it. The bulk of the designs done by, or made for, the Adams is classical in character. They made nothing in the style of Louis XV., but a vast quantity of their work would be indistinguishable from

the French classical ornament of the style of Louis XVI. The writer in the *Dictionary of National Biography* sums their merits up not unjustly: 'Of their decorative work generally it may be said that it was rich but neat, refined but not effeminate, chaste but not severe, and that it will probably have quite as lasting and beneficial effect upon English taste as their architectural structures.'

The illustrations of Adam designs are from furniture in mahogany. The 'neatness' is well exemplified by the sideboard (Plate CXVIII.) in the possession of Mrs. Rivers Turnbull. It shows us two of the stock classical patterns, the flute and the oval patera or rosette. The more elaborate one belonging to Sir Samuel Montague, M.P. (Plate CXVII.), has a finely carved mask, flutes, swags, acanthus leafage, and scallop shells. The urn and pedestal arrangement appears in a fine example communicated by Messrs. Gill and Reigate (Plate CXIX.). As to the lyre-back chair (Plate CXXI.), one of a beautiful set belonging to Mr. Augustus Spencer, it seems impossible to dogmatise. The main shape is distinctly that of Chippendale, and the ornament may be that of the Adams. The set is attributed to Sheraton. We know that the Adams occasionally designed a chair with a Chippendale top rail, and, on the whole, it seems possible that this fine set may have been a tentative production of their firm based upon the general shape of their predecessor Chippendale, whose last edition of the *Director* came out in 1762.

CHAPTER XIX

SHEARER AND HEPPELWHITE: I

IF Chippendale has been unduly exalted with posthumous honours at the cost of several others, Heppelwhite has obtained bare justice at one other's expense. His name is remembered, and his furniture serves as a model for present cabinetmakers, but his friend and probable collaborator, Thomas Shearer, is almost forgotten. It is, however, difficult to draw any distinction between the styles of the two men. Their designs appear in the same book, and it is a question which deserves the credit for the new shapes introduced by them. To Heppelwhite may perhaps be attributed the shield-back chair, and to Shearer the screen writing-case, which first appears under his name. These two men's work evinces, on the whole, great practical common-sense. Chippendale allowed his fancy to run away with him in many exuberant drawings. Heppelwhite and Shearer wisely left the ultra-fantastic alone. To Chippendale we must ascribe it as a transcendent merit that he relied so much upon the mere carving of one species of wood, restricting himself to its most legitimate use. Against Heppelwhite it may be objected as a defect that he went far in the combination of cabinet-work with painting. Whatever the feminine charm of this method of decorating furniture, it is a method only to be tolerated when at its best, and that because tradition authorises it. Inlay of woods is a beautiful art which

many of the finest pieces of furniture have been able to dispense with. Nevertheless it is so inherently akin to the material and technique of the cabinetmaker, it appealed with such paramount force to the cabinetmakers of the later eighteenth century, and these last produced such exquisite work of this kind, that I leave it to others to find what objections they like. Theoretically, inlaying is perhaps a sign of incipient decadence of an art. To trouble oneself with minute twists and turns of scroll-work in coloured woods may not be worthy of the genius of a Grinling Gibbons or of a Bachelier of Toulouse; but it seems a grace inseparable from the furniture of Heppelwhite and Sheraton, furniture the very best, perhaps, that was ever made to display it. This I say with the work of Riesener and Roentgen and their peers present to my mind. The French were so preoccupied with the claims of ormolu that there is a constant fight between the relative splendours of the sculptor and chaser on the one hand, and of the inlayer on the other. If one were asked to name the most artistically successful, one would fall back upon Oeben, who often moderated his ormolu in the interests of a quieter style of inlay than was practised later. In the work of Heppelwhite and Sheraton the inlay has a fair field, with none of the 'clinquant' of ormolu to put it in the shade. When it is confined to whatever in conventional ornament the genius of the method will allow, there is every practical reason, at any rate, to admire it. We have no cause to complain if we can find plenty of specimens, probably better in an artistic sense, after one hundred and twenty years, than they were on the day of their making. The closer it attempts the realism of the picture-maker, the less legitimate, and the less satisfactory, does inlay become. We have at the present time, under the auspices of the so-called 'Art nouveau,' modern French instances of landscapes with evening skies and rivers which, it is

hoped, a flowing grain will imitate. The eighteenth century inlayers hardly overstepped the limits of their art so ignorantly as this. Thus they have spared us the ultra-modern absurdity of a landscape with a keyhole in the centre of the sky.

But they made mistakes, and the mistake of Heppelwhite lay in his calling in the aid of the coach-painter to produce naturalistic flowers and birds upon the beautiful surface of his wood. So much is paint in his most elaborate specimens, that for many square inches the wood is disguised. Yet it will generally be found that the more paint, the less happy the result. Not every colour will harmonise with the yellow tone of satin-wood. The same discordancy is to be found in this style of furniture as leaps to the eye in the French furniture decorated with plaques of Sèvres porcelain. Just as the cold white of the porcelain ground is hopelessly out of tone with the glowing red of mahogany, so the multiplication of painted colours and tones injures the quiet effect of the satin-wood. It is not to be supposed that successful or nearly successful examples are not to be found of this wood-painting. There are high degrees of merit even in a method which on the whole is to be deprecated. The wonderfully preserved dressing-table, No. 635 in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Plate CXLV.), and the cabinet No. 636 (Plate CXLVI.), are probably of Sheraton design, as is certainly the arm-chair from a set belonging to Sir Samuel Montague (Plate CXXXVIII.). The same may be said of his table with flowers and peacock-feather-painted top (Plate CXLIV.). All these specimens are in excellent condition, and must have been kept with the greatest care. They show the style at its best, and from the more simple of them the Heppelwhite painted furniture may be imagined. Both Sheraton's and his were probably painted by the same hands, and Heppelwhite's reference to the method is quoted and his speciality discussed in

the next chapter. When the Kauffmann or Cipriani figure-subject has lost, from wear, its original freshness, we discover the superiority of wood inlay over painting. The former can be restored without appreciable loss of artistic merit. In many respects it improves with age, and, to begin with, its more restricted range of tones was in its favour. There is not so much opportunity for garishness in wood inlay as in pigment. If the painted style in English furniture of the eighteenth century could be compared in decorative power with the painting of the old Italian 'cassoni,' there would be more to be said for it. As it is, in durability it is inferior to the Sèvres-mounted furniture of France, and scarcely superior in aesthetic quality.

Thomas Shearer, of whom little is known, is chiefly responsible for *The Cabinet-Maker's London Book of Prices*, which, as its title further shows, made a new departure in furniture-books. It is a well-produced quarto work for the cabinetmaker himself, and shows the cost of every imaginable detail of any piece of furniture. The first edition was published in 1788. Those to which I refer are the second of 1793 and third of 1803. There is a frontispiece without an engraver's name, in which, if the picture part is bombastic, the ornamental border of medallions and flowers and trophies is very pretty and suitable to the subject. The details are exactly such as were executed upon furniture either in paint or inlay. In the picture a classic lady holds an open book with a design of a cabinet upon it. A cupid with compass and square unfolds a large scroll on which is inscribed 'Unanimity with Justice.' In the background is a cylinder-bureau bookcase, with urn and swan-necked pediment. Of the plates in this edition eighteen are by Shearer, six by Heppelwhite, and five by W. Casement, these last being mostly designs for the panes of glazed cabinet doors. There is some uncertainty as to whether Shearer did not publish his plates

separate from the prices. I have seen a collection of nineteen plates dated 1788, which are nearly but not quite identical, plate for plate, with the 1793 edition. There is no title and no letterpress. On the title-page of the edition of 1803 it is stated that there are twenty-nine copper-plates, but there is a supplement of 1805, by George Atkinson and William Somerville, cabinet-makers now forgotten, with two more. The most important of these last contains two designs for side-boards, one of which is quite plain and rectangular; the other is of a thick terminal shape at each end, and has a 'sarcophagus wine-cooler' beneath the centre part. These two designs show the fearful decadence which set in with the nineteenth century. They are both unpleasant, but the plainer of the two is so purely business-like and inartistic, that it is difficult to quarrel with it, except for being a sideboard instead of an office table. Such additions as these to a composite book make it necessary to give each designer credit for his own.

The prices for each particular piece of furniture are given in too great detail for quotation. Speaking generally, we are struck at first by the extreme apparent lowness of cost. It must, however, be remembered that neither price of material nor any profits either of maker or seller are included. The computations are solely concerned with the cost of labour, and though the items are very small, sixpence a hundred and twenty years ago meant more than sixpence now. The first piece in the book is a 'dressing chest' or bedroom chest of drawers, one of which is a 'furniture drawer,' containing, that is, numbers of little partitions, one for ink and wafers, another for pins and pens, with all sorts of 'false bottoms' and 'lift-outs.' An example in perfect condition is in the possession of the Earl of Ancaster at Normanton Park. For such an object no less than fifty-one different items are mentioned, and even then a practised cabinetmaker only could make out the bill, as

a single item such as 'hinging' may recur over and over again. If we take the carcase of the dressing-chest, 'three feet long, four drawers in ditto, cock-headed astragal or stone moulding on the edge of the top or the edge veneer'd, and a string in the upper corner, fast plinth or common brackets,' its price is 18s. 'Veneering the top' costs 1s. Each joint in the veneer (of the top) is priced at 6d. Veneering each end costs 10d., with each joint in the veneer of the ends at 3d. In an ordinary chest of drawers there might be two joints of veneer in the top and one in each side, which would make an amount for veneering the top and sides of 4s. 4d. This does not include preparing and glueing.

To quote therefore at length from this interesting Book of Prices is of no avail, especially when the additional considerations of material are to be considered. A deal carcase, with deal at 2d. or 2½d. per foot, might be reckoned at 12s. Ordinary mahogany costs now 1s. per foot; veneer 1d. a foot. Our general conclusion must be that the price paid for a genuine old piece such as this in the style of Heppelwhite, with all the pleasant associations of age superadded, is very probably less than the original cost of making. We may often reasonably congratulate ourselves on having by no means the worst of the bargain. The inlaid mahogany chest of drawers reproduced is typical of Shearer's and Heppelwhite's general shapes, and is the property of Sir Charles Robinson (Plate CXXV.). A peculiarity of the book is that no chairs appear in the plates. Presumably Shearer did not pride himself upon chairs, and Heppelwhite preferred to show his full strength in the book which he himself was shortly to publish. The fact indeed that there are so few of Heppelwhite's plates rather favours the belief that they were merely included because Shearer considered that his own claim upon the public was insufficient without the fame of his friend to support him. Of Shearer personally we know

nothing, not even his standing as a cabinetmaker, nor how in that respect he compared with Heppelwhite. He must be judged by his designs, in which so many alternatives are sometimes given on the same plate and the same piece of furniture that it is difficult to judge of their true effect. In his first plate, one of the most important, the pediment of a library bookcase may be either of the usual broken and swan-necked shape with scroll ornament upon it, or it may be graced with the semi-circular fan pattern,—that universal favourite of the time—in the centre, with little fan-inlaid ovals set upright at the ends. The space between the swan-necks is filled by an urn with pendent husks attached. The pedestal of the urn has a patera upon it, but if the pedestal is adorned with the fan semi-circle, then a realistic wheat-sheaf is to take the place of the patera. There are alternatives for the cornice also, which is a light one, but the second member from the top is in each case a line of astragalus beading. The brass or wood work of the panes of glass, which shows pear and kidney shapes, is not so happy as in the designs of Casement's plates. Taking this into consideration with the fact that the bureau (central and lower) part is shown open with all its fittings, and that no very great amount of ornament is given, we may perhaps conclude that Shearer's interests lay rather in constructional problems and general good workmanship. His door fronts show only rings of inlay, scallop-shaped, or formed of leaves. His handles are of the usual drop-ring kind with circular plates. Such simple fittings and decorations might, however, be expected in a price-book the chief aim of which was to give the average cost of furniture of the usual kind.

More successful, because less teased about with alternatives, appears to be his 'Wing Clothes-Press,' a wardrobe upper part, with drawers and small cupboard in one wing beneath. Here the swan neck gives way to a convex rail at each end and two concave ones in

the centre. Between the two flattish concave rails appears the semi-circle and its pedestal all in one. Upon this arch shape is inlaid or painted a full-grown wheat-sheaf, flanked by fan-inlaid upright ovals. An urn tops the whole, and other smaller ones mark the ends of the various curves of the rail of the pediment. The frieze of the cornice is filled with a row of close-set pendants, forming, by juxtaposition, the tops of pointed arches, which seems a favourite idea with Shearer, though it may be found amongst Chippendale's details. The rest of the piece is of a severely plain description.

After this comes a series of sideboards, unambitious but admirable. They have waved or serpentine fronts, sometimes broken by jutting angles above the tops of the regulation four legs. The centre curves outwards, the ends hollow inwards, but in one case there is an alternative ogee curve, both bulging and hollow, for the ends. Down the legs, which are slim, tapering, and spade ended, run lines of inlay or inlaid husks. Little ovals, fan-inlaid, grace the tops of legs, and there are generally bracket-shaped corner-pieces under the central drawer. Bands of dark wood run round the drawers, enclosing long rectangles or ovals of a light colour, mahogany and satin-wood respectively. The large sideboard, with a 'furnitured' secrétaire centre, reproduced in Plate CXXIII., the property of Mr. E. B. Wauton, of Uppingham, might be of Shearer's make. Bands of inlay forming pointed arches give a Gothic touch to a scheme chiefly composed of the classical stock-in-trade of the Adams, Heppelwhite, and Sheraton. It is beautifully made and of very fine mahogany. The ring handles are a restoration.

Sometimes the sideboard is a pure semi-circle, and the most grandiose of all has a plain convex front with two straight wings, and six legs to carry that front, with others, not shown, behind. This design is in fact a moderate-sized sideboard of the kind already described

—such as may be seen in a thousand little country parlours at the present day—with the addition of a convex-railed backboard and the side wings. These wings are raised above the central top slab, and carry urn-shaped knife-boxes. On the lower front panels of the wings are upright ovals, with painted figures in the style of Angelica Kauffmann or Cipriani. On the backboard is a basket full of flowers and fruit. The paintings do not look well in the design, and we may imagine what their appearance was likely to be after a few years of use. There are extremely similar moderate-sized sideboards in Heppelwhite's book which may be compared with Shearer's. The conclusion is likely to be that it would be very difficult indeed to give a definite attribution as between Heppelwhite and Shearer. The more ornament of a lighter, smaller kind, the more likely it is to be by Heppelwhite; the greater severity, the more attributable to Shearer. The urn is as much a perquisite of one as the other, but to Shearer alone perhaps may be assigned the wheat-sheaf and the central fan semi-circle above a square.

Coming to a bureau bookcase, we find that suavely curved and hollowed lower rail, in which the feet seem mere prolongations of the curves, so absolutely characteristic of Heppelwhite; and the same is the case with a waved fronted chest of drawers. Where the waved line is found not only in the horizontal direction, but also in the perpendicular—that is, down the two front corners—we can trace a superiority in Heppelwhite over Shearer. His curves are not so sudden or Dutch-like. But in the particular instance of Shearer, the designer has done the worst for himself by his extraordinary perspective, which represents a chest of drawers at least six feet deep from front to back. This defect of perspective is a common one with most of the furniture-books, so common as to suggest that it was occasionally intentional, by way of giving the idea that a chest of

drawers at £5, 10s. might be expected to hold twice as much as any one would imagine. More obvious still is the usefulness of this scheme in those designs which Shearer clearly has most at heart. When we look at his lady's dressing-table, with its numerous real drawers, sham drawers, glass frames to slide, weights to make them rise, 'furniture drawer' details and the rest, it is plain that the more capacious it can be made to look, the better. Perhaps not even Sheraton can outdo Shearer in his ingenuities of arrangement. It is curious to reflect that these elaborations are the natural outcome of the rather primitive domestic arrangements of our great-grandfathers. The practice of making the interior belie the exterior was due to the habit of using a bedroom as a sitting-room and *vice-versâ*. A bed, in old and hospitable times, might be found anywhere, even in the hall. There are old Scottish instances of boxbeds which shut up against the wall and are invisible by day, or only discernible by cracks in the panelling near the floor. A house at Inverness successively occupied in 1745 by the Pretender and the Duke of Cumberland was the only one whose parlour did not contain a bed. Miss Singleton, *Furniture of our Forefathers*, tells us also of frequent hall beds in old American houses. Now that our rooms have their set uses, the necessity is not so pressing for disguises and harlequin arrangements. Only when these interior fittings accompany a graceful exterior do they call for much notice.

The shield shape, of which Heppelwhite made so much use in his chairs, is employed by Shearer for a mirror-frame which tops a combination writing- and dressing-table. This has a cylindrical front, rising above the back of which is a species of divided plinth with hollow curved sides. The bottom of the shield-shaped glass, which is supported by two slender branching curves, works in the deep hollow of the division of the plinth. The arrangement and shape of the glass is

something similar to that of the painted dressing-table, No. 635 in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Plate CXLV.). This example is Shearer's own speciality, and not to be found in Heppelwhite's collection. The same may be said of a 'writing fire-screen,' which is of an upright secrétaire shape, very shallow, not more than six inches from back to front. It was to be used by a lady who wished to write her letters near the fire but protected from its heat. There is a falling front, with metal quadrants, which fills the upper half. The lower is a cupboard with folding doors. Inside there are many drawers and pigeon-holes. The top is either straight or convex, and the whole is supported upon a pair of trestle legs sufficiently high to allow of the writer's feet to be kept warm. There was a good opportunity here for graces of ornament, which would have added very little to the weight; but simplicity is the hall-mark of Shearer, and a lightness considerably greater than that of Chippendale, but less than Heppelwhite's. There are many designs of the latter which are so like Shearer's that either might have made them. But in the few plates by Heppelwhite in this book are to be found two objects which Shearer would perhaps not have planned. One of these is a cabinet resting on a lower part schemed like a sideboard. It has winged cherubs' heads upon the triangular brackets, presumably painted, which support the central lower drawer. The top is surmounted by an eagle perched on a ball in full relief—that eagle which we find so often surmounting circular gilt mirrors of the period. The painting and inlay are more suitable than in the large sideboard with the basket of flowers designed by Shearer, for whom the whole cabinet is too elaborate.

The second example is a little work-table for a lady, upon the thinnest of thin legs, joined by X-stretchers, simply pierced, and rising in curves to support a central urn finial. There is one drawer in the table, upon which is a movable upper part of two tiers of drawers

covering the back half of the table. This upper part has a tray top or border with a broken pediment filled up with an urn to carry out the design of the stretchers. If Shearer's name were affixed to this, there would be no doubt of his equality with Heppelwhite in designing a general shape. Unfortunately for him, Heppelwhite's name appears on the plate. The conclusion must be that the latter surpassed him in grace though not in workmanship and ingenuity of interior arrangement. It is quite possible that Shearer may have given the initial impetus in the direction of simplicity and lightness, which differentiates these two men's work so completely from that of Chippendale. Carving in relief practically does not appear on their furniture in this book. Heppelwhite's chairs are to be considered apart in this respect, together with his bedposts. Smooth, polished curves and straight lines are both men's characteristic, accompanied by inlay, which Chippendale eschewed, and by realistic painting, which he also never indulged in. For this reason, and for his carving, Chippendale must be put upon a higher plane of artistic achievement; but for unassuming utility and light gracefulness, combined with resourcefulness of interior work, Thomas Shearer holds a worthy place, though Heppelwhite surpassed him. What the former would have done if his volume had not been a price-book must remain an open question. The simplicity of his designs, or rather the absence of decoration, was no doubt dictated by the necessity of being typical.

CHAPTER XX

HEPPELWHITE: II

THE book published by Heppelwhite is worthy to be compared in its style of printing with the fine folio of Chippendale. *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide, or Repository of Designs for every Article of Household Furniture in the newest and most approved Taste*, by A. Heppelwhite and Co. (so he spells his name), is a folio containing 125 copper-plates, published first in 1788, with a second edition in 1789, and a third in 1794. I refer to the edition of 1789. The Preface commences: 'To unite elegance and utility, and blend the useful with the agreeable, has ever been considered a difficult but an honourable task.' The authors go on to say they have tried to produce a work 'useful to the mechanic and serviceable to the gentleman.' 'English taste and workmanship,' they add, 'have of late years been much sought for by surrounding nations; and the mutability of all things, but more especially of fashions, has rendered the labours of our predecessors in this line of little use.' We shall see presently that Sheraton says exactly the same of Heppelwhite as Heppelwhite of Chippendale and his contemporaries. The claim that English taste is being 'sought for by surrounding nations' is interesting. To the American colonies, of course, much furniture was exported, but the phrase used by Heppelwhite seems scarcely applicable to the Americans, who in 1788 were but just ratifying their new constitution as the United States. Does Heppel-

white claim that England is leading the way in front of France? That, as regards his own furniture, can scarcely be maintained, for the truth has to be admitted that the main lines of much of his work, and of course those of Shearer also, are to be found in many a piece of French furniture made some years previously.

The long tapering legs and the concave curves upon the sides of the superstructure in Shearer's writing-table with semi-circular top, evince his debt to France. The double plinth with concave sides and a space for the swing of the mirror in his dressing-table can also be found in French furniture, which was being made by Riesener and his rivals before either Shearer's or Heppelwhite's books were published. We must turn, then, to other countries for that extraneous demand to which Heppelwhite refers. From Spain have recently arrived chairs of Chippendale style, which have most probably remained in that country ever since they were ordered from England. It is reasonable perhaps to suppose that a considerable trade in English furniture was being done with that and other nations. The monumental cabinet to which I refer later on (see Plate CLVII.), made by Shackleton and Seddon for Charles IV. of Spain, is a case in point.

It is further stated in the preface that the book is meant to help those who, living far from London, are behind the times, and the authors end with the words, 'Though we lay no claim to extraordinary merit in our designs' (this is perhaps a hit at Chippendale's pretensions, as, for instance, regards his riband-back chairs), 'we flatter ourselves they will be found serviceable to young workmen in general, and occasionally to more experienced ones.' Posterity has thoroughly endorsed the modest aspirations of Heppelwhite and Company.

Theirs is a businesslike book, and does not waste many words. Let us quote part of their brief for

painted chairs. 'For chairs a new and very elegant fashion has arisen within these few years of finishing them with painted or japanned work, which gives a rich and splendid appearance to the minuter parts of the ornaments, which are generally thrown in by the painter. . . . This style . . . allows a framework less massy than is required for mahogany; and by assorting the prevailing colour to the furniture and light of the room, affords opportunity, by the variety of grounds which may be introduced, to make the whole accord in harmony with a pleasing and striking effect to the eye. Japanned chairs should always have linen or cotton cases or cushions to accord with the general hue of the chair. . . . This kind of chair in general is called banister back chair.'

It would be idle to deny a certain attractiveness to this style of decoration, but a moment's consideration of a popular pattern is sufficient to destroy its claim to a very high artistic place. The Prince of Wales's feathers appear in chair backs either set separately as the three upright splats, or joined together at the bottom after their usual fashion. For carving in wood they are unsuitable enough; 'thrown in by the painter' with realistic light and shade they are preposterous. Critics of French furniture take exception to the animals and landscapes of Beauvais tapestry for chair and sofa seats. As little can be said for the invention which crushes feathers behind a sitter's back. The explanation of the fashion, no doubt, resides in the patronage which Heppelwhite obtained from the Prince of Wales and his friends. Whatever the details of the painting, it is obvious that gradual friction, though at the very first it might improve by toning down the crudeness of new paint, is bound to result in ultimate ruin of the delicate surface. In carved woodwork the opposite is the case. Every hour of legitimate wear lends an additional charm of 'patina,' and if carved

oak, walnut, or mahogany had no other claim over painted furniture, this would be sufficient to establish their superiority.

Acknowledgment of the debt of England to France is to be found in such passages as the following:—'An elegant drawing-room with modern furniture is scarce complete without a confidante. . . . This . . . is sometimes so constructed that the ends take away and leave a regular sofa; the ends may be used as Barjier chairs.' The plate represents a sofa with waved top and two ends partitioned off, but not detachable. It is curious to observe that though the designs of most chairs, window-seats and tables generally have their back legs drawn on the plate, those of sideboards and sofas are omitted, though in the perspective views chosen they could easily be seen. If properly introduced they would certainly not interfere with the lines of the design any more than they do in the case of tables and chairs. Those chair designs which omit the back legs impress the beholder with a decided sense of incompleteness.

France, again, is responsible for the Duchesse. 'This piece of furniture also is derived from the French. Two Barjier chairs . . . with a stool in the middle form the Duchesse.'

We get a hint that the sideboard[1] is of no great antiquity, from the remark that 'the great utility of this piece of furniture has procured it a very general reception.' Heppelwhite's designs for these, as we have seen, are so similar to those in Shearer's book already mentioned, that they do not call for further notice.

That very elusive term of 'Pembroke table' is shown once for all to be a comprehensive one, for Heppelwhite says they 'may be of various shapes.' We shall see later that Sheraton's Pembroke table is indeed different from Heppelwhite's, which is on four

[1] The sideboard of the oak period was of different shape. See pages 94-95.

slim tapering legs adorned with urns or husks, and has a rectangular or oval top consisting of a central piece and two flaps. As the Pembroke table is supposed to have been called after the lady for whom it was first made, so is the case with Rudd's, or the reflecting dressing-table. 'This is the most complete dressing-table made, possessing every convenience which can be wanted, or mechanism and ingenuity supply. It derives its name from a once popular character for whom it is reported it was first invented.' There is a lifting glass concealed in a drawer on either side of the person who uses the table.

We may complete our notice of Heppelwhite's letterpress with the observation that 'stuffed headboards' to beds are recommended, and that what Heppelwhite calls cabriole chairs have stuffed backs, sometimes shield-shaped, but, strangely enough, have not the cabriole leg. The legs are straight and tapering, and in section either rectangular or round. Chairs with cabriole legs are given in the plates, but are not so described. That also which we should call a shield-back settee, he describes as a 'bar-back sofa.'

One of the obvious differences between the styles of Chippendale and Heppelwhite consists in the fact that the former seldom used turned work for his furniture, whereas Heppelwhite employs it frequently for the legs of his chairs, pier-tables, window-seats, and sofas. It serves indeed very often merely as a basis for decoration with flutes and reeds, and his favourite narrow leaf; but as Heppelwhite's scheme of decoration is seldom so profuse as Chippendale's, the influence of the lathe is very apparent.

A second peculiarity of Heppelwhite is a habit of replacing a solid wood pediment upon his library bookcases and bureau bookcases with very slim, open scroll-work or wreath adornments which depended upon wires for what small durability they possessed. This flimsy

work is found even on the centre of sofa backs in his designs, and also below the frames of side-tables. Its utter want of permanence is proved by the fact that furniture in the style of Heppelwhite with these ornaments still existing upon it is rarely to be met with. It is fortunate that these excrescences are scarcely missed from the more solid elements of the design. The mouldings of Heppelwhite's cornices are often extremely well proportioned and elegant, and form a very adequate completion of his furniture even without a pediment. On girandoles and pier-glasses this open work assumes an even larger part of the scheme, so that it is sometimes difficult to understand how it could have been carried out at all. Yet in the designs of the Adams, open work was used to an enormous extent.

It is time now to point to those classes of furniture in which Heppelwhite achieved unmistakable success, and perhaps he would himself have preferred his shield-back and other chairs in carved mahogany to the painted 'banister back' with its flowers or Prince of Wales's feathers. There are three main classes into which his designs may be divided: the shield-back, the square-back, either open or solid, and the oval-back. The shield shape fits on to two short pieces of wood, which are practically prolongations of the back legs. Hardly ever does the splat in a chair by Heppelwhite come down to the seat. There are one or two instances to be found, but they are exceptions, and this difference of construction between him and Chippendale is very particularly to be noticed. Chippendale's four cross-bar type (Plate C.1) is almost the only one in which by the nature of the design he is compelled to break through his rule. In some cases the bottom of the shield comes nearer to the stuffed seat than in others, and those chairs which show the least gap, and have the largest shield, are perhaps the happiest in design. The square-backed class is treated with upright bars, either straight

or shaped. Counting in the outer uprights, there may be either four—arranged at equal intervals—or five, in which case the centre three are often lighter and closer together than the two outside pieces; or seven, when generally the five centre bars are grouped somewhat closely together. There are exceptional instances where a comparatively straight bar alternates with a shaped one, but one and all, as we have seen, fit, not into the frame of the seat, but into a light horizontal piece which is two or three inches above it. This seems an inherently weaker system of construction than that of Chippendale, but the fact remains that Heppelwhite's chairs have stood the test of time, and are really stronger than they look (Plates CXXX., CXXXI., CXXXII.). He differentiates himself from Chippendale entirely in his treatment of the legs. The former's straight parallel-sided leg is never used by Heppelwhite. His chair legs taper from the top either to a plain thinner end, or terminate in the 'spade' shape formed by a thicker section or shoulder an inch or two above the floor. The spade shape itself also tapers from its top to the ground. Variations are found in a ball foot of small dimensions, or a club foot which is the same as if the spade foot were cut off short just below its broadest part. In his turned legs Heppelwhite is fond of an astragal moulding about three inches below the top, and a similar one a little less above the bottom. Flutes are frequent with him, often three down the front of a rectangular leg; but the commonest treatment is to have a thin raised moulding edging the leg on both sides. The centre part, in consequence, is a slightly sunken field upon which the pendent husks are found carved in relief. Round legs may be fluted or reeded, and in the latter case a continuous riband may run round from top to bottom. Flutes and reeds, or both together, one above, the other below, and the encircling riband, are also found in his bed-posts.

In the backs of his shield chairs there is often a

reminiscence of Chippendale's jar-shaped splat, and a very frequent detail is the festooned drapery or 'dish-clout' ornament. This often spreads across the whole back, being caught up at the outer corners of the back and in the centre, where there is very commonly an urn shape. Little riband bows are sometimes used as a finish in the centre of the upper rail. Wheat-ears are also commonly found.

In the open square-backed chairs the same ornaments are employed, together with considerable diversity in the shape of the upright bars. These have their straightness broken in the centre by small circles with little rosettes in relief upon them. Where the bars are not straight they are sometimes terminal-shaped, and there are frequent cases of ovals and straight bars alternated, ellipses alone set side by side, interlaced round arches, and even pointed arches interlaced.

In the oval-backed chairs especially, a very common form of splat consists of four, five, or more curved bars spreading outwards into a fan shape at the top and often at the bottom. The most successful are those chairs in which the fan is wider above than below. These bars are best when fluted on their surfaces above and reeded below—a hollow, that is, contrasting with a round. The open divisions between the bars have rounded ends. This fan-barred splat is used in one of the few chairs by Heppelwhite in which he seems to have taken a hint from Chippendale as to the construction of the back. There is a type of Chippendale chair in which the Greek anthemion or 'honeysuckle' pattern adorns the centre of the top. Heppelwhite has replaced this by his dropping husks. In a second instance, however, where Heppelwhite has brought the splat down to the chair seat, he has filled up the whole of his splat with four honeysuckles of varying sizes, one above the other, and bounded by continuous interlacing straps.

In some chairs, especially those which have uphol-

stered square backs, the upper rail is made four or five inches deep, and affords room for a considerable amount of inlay or painting. Festoons of flowers, laurel wreaths, and bow and arrow trophies are to be found, together with circular or oval medallions, with figures in the style of Cipriani and Angelica Kauffmann.

Generally speaking, the chair designs given by Heppelwhite in his book are good, and the low relief carving of his wheat-ears and long waved and serrated leaves set close together very attractive. Occasionally he goes astray. There are two hall chairs which show him at his worst. One with a solid oval back has five wheat-ears sticking up unsupported in a fan shape above the top; the other has a back formed entirely of a huge urn. But such aberrations as this are exceptional. The arms of his chairs are much better in the actual object than in the designs, many of which are ill-drawn in this respect. Taking a bird's-eye view of the arms, we find that they have a graceful horizontal curve besides the vertical curve which sweeps down from the junction (sometimes rather high up) with the back, to the supports.

In various less important objects Heppelwhite was seldom at fault. His upholstered window-seats are very elegant. Generally they have stuffed ends which project upwards above the legs and roll over outwards at the top, showing a volute on the front. Occasionally the ends are open, with light bar-work. The propensity to draping, which Sheraton carried to a greater degree, is noticeable in some of these designs. The front of the seat is sometimes draped with a scalloped edge, or with small closely caught up festoons of drapery, varied with tassels between the curves.

Sofas have serpentine, convex-curved, or straight upper edges to the back. The ends either have an open arm and support above the leg, or are upholstered and projecting at an angle from the back, or curving

all in one piece with it. The only open-backed design is that for a four-shield, or, as Heppelwhite calls it, a 'bar-backed' sofa. The general scheme of all these follows the French style of the Louis XVI. period. Tea-caddies, square, round, oblong, and sometimes with sides and front in the 'bombé' shape, all afford opportunities for pretty designs of inlay or paint. Ovals or circles with leaf rosettes or fan patterns straight or waved are commonest on the tops as a centre, with leaf or scroll ornaments outside of them to fill up the field. The same ornaments appear on the slanting-topped knife-boxes with serpentine fronts which are a speciality of Heppelwhite and Sheraton as appurtenances of their sideboards, and were not known to Chippendale. The urn-shaped knife-box (Plate CXXIX.), of which Heppelwhite was equally, perhaps more, fond, gives opportunity for gadroon or flute carving, with leaves, and the draped ornament so often used wherever there was any length in which to display it. Round the bodies of the urns it runs, divided by oval-shaped pateræ, and it reappears very frequently upon the rectangular cupboards which were often made as pedestals to support a single urn. For the plainer brass-bound cellarets it is not possible to have much admiration. Octagonal or oval in shape, upon short tapered legs, they are certainly superior to the sarcophagus of a slightly later date; but they have not the elegance of the urn shapes, which recall those being made in Sèvres porcelain at the same time. The lids of these urns are made to slide on a central shaft sufficiently high for the extraction of the knives which they contained.

Heppelwhite's 'Desk and Bookcase' is a very severely shaped piece of furniture. The front is always straight, and the glass cupboard above has two doors. There is one design of a cupboard with projecting centre and two wings, the middle part being the highest, but this is an exception. The only curved lines are to

be found in the lower rail of the bureau part, which is shaped in one piece with the short legs. These curve slightly outwards, and make the straight lines of the sides of the bureau have a slightly concave ending. The chief variant for the foot, if the lower rail is straight, is a bombé bracket shape showing on the front and side an almost ogee moulding. This foot, commonly known as the 'scroll' foot, is found on large and small pieces of furniture, from bookcases, tall-boys (Plate CIX.3) and dressers (Plate XLIII.2), to toilet-glasses (Plate CXXV.) and clocks (Plate CXLV.) of the period, and was not a speciality of Heppelwhite though very characteristic of him. It was used by Chippendale. If the lower part of Heppelwhite's desk and bookcase has not the sloping bureau top, but is rectangular with a draw-out and fall-down front, guided by metal quadrants, it is then a secretary and bookcase, but apart from this difference the general scheme is the same. Not all of his designs are fitted with the flimsy open wire-based work at the top; and there is no reason to be found in their proportions why one should have it and the other be exempt. The cornices are all of about the same size, light and elegant, with small dental courses above a frieze which is sometimes fluted upright, and otherwise moderately adorned, but often plain.

Tambour writing-tables have sliding shutter tops working on a curve. At the back the top is straight, flat, and filled with drawers and pigeon-holes, a draw-out writing-slab lurking beneath.

There is a great charm of appropriateness in Heppelwhite's bedroom furniture. The scheme for a wardrobe is very much the same as that for the desk and bookcase just described. The main difference is that there is, of course, no sloping bureau top, and that the breadth is greater in the wardrobe in proportion to the height. Cornice and feet are treated in much the same way. The upper part of a wardrobe or a tall-boy

is generally slightly narrower than the lower, and gives occasion for a very exiguous plinth between the two parts. The most ambitious design for a tall-boy or double chest of drawers has fluted uprights projecting in front of the drawers, and a large urn above, from the handles of which depend swags of leaves with their loose ends lying on the top of the cornice. This has jutting ends to cover the projecting uprights, and smaller urns with a different shaped top for a finish.

Many of the commode dressing-tables and dressing-drawers have serpentine fronts and a considerable amount of inlaid or painted ornamentation. Many are quite plain, but an object in which Heppelwhite particularly excels, and on which he sometimes lavished a good deal of shaping and decoration, is the toilet-glass to be placed on the dressing-drawers (Plate cxxv.). These are delightful in form, with oval or shield-shaped glasses between curved supports. The edges are daintily inlaid, and wherever there is a chance of using ivory fittings, as for handles and for decorating the voluted ends of uprights, full advantage is taken of it. Sometimes the glass is arranged with the longer dimension of the oval placed horizontally, or else the oval is replaced by a rectangular shape. There are generally two or three little drawers in the base, except in cases where the support is a mere pair of trestle legs joined by a connecting bar.

I have touched on the majority of Heppelwhite's more important patterns of furniture. There are numerous minor objects in which he shows the same grace and avoidance of outlying ornament. Charming little urn-stands upon very thin tapering legs are to be found in his style. These often have a tiny slab to draw out from under the top, upon which the cup to be filled may be placed. Pole-screens on tripod legs, or upon a circular base, have a circular, oval, or rectangular screen much smaller than those of Chippendale.

'Horse fire-screens' are upon a pair of trestle legs, and remind one of Shearer's screen writing-table. The screen part slides up and down in grooves on the uprights. Candle-stands rest on a single pole with circular base, or on a tripod, or else have three or four long legs stretching from top to bottom and branching into curves. In these last, and in his window cornice and mirror designs, Heppelwhite breaks away from his general habit of rectangular plainness without projections. As I have said before, it is difficult to conceive how some of his pier-glasses and girandoles could possibly have been executed with any hope of their lasting intact for a twelvemonth.

But such things as these are not Heppelwhite at his best. They are an aberration from his usual sound common-sense, which is admirably shown in his bureau bookcases, sideboards, and especially in his bedroom furniture. He has not the variety either of ornament or of shape which Chippendale and Sheraton possess, but his patterns are perhaps more in vogue for imitation to this day than theirs, because of their moderation and their unpretentious practical usefulness. They serve as his only memorial, for not enough is known of Heppelwhite even to warrant his inclusion in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

CHAPTER XXI

SHERATON: I

WITH the last and one of the two greatest English furniture designers it is possible to give some biographical particulars. Thomas Sheraton was born in 1751 at Stockton-on-Tees. He had no regular education, but 'showed,' as the *Dictionary of National Biography* somewhat paradoxically phrases it, 'from the first natural artistic learning,[1] and taught himself drawing and geometry.' A zealous baptist, his first publication was *A Scriptural Illustration of the Doctrine of Regeneration*, 1782, by 'Thomas Sheraton, junior,' a 'mechanic.' This description of himself is of more interest to us than the subject of the work. A mechanic or mechanician Sheraton certainly showed himself in the interior workings of his furniture, but he was a great deal more than that. 'As a practical cabinetmaker he does not seem to have attained much success, but as a designer of furniture he developed a skill and originality which placed him in the front rank of technical artists.' Sheraton came to London in 1790, and, living in Soho, began to publish a series of manuals of furniture design. The first was a collection of 84 large folio plates called *Designs for Furniture*, but not dated. In 1791 appeared his best work, *The Cabinet-Maker's and Upholsterer's Drawing-Book*, with 'Accompaniment' and Appendix within the next two years. This book was a quarto with 111 plates.

The second edition (1793-1796) contained 119 plates,

[1] The biographer presumably meant to write *leaning*.

and the third (1802) 122 plates. This last is rare, and a reprint, undated, has been published by Mr. R. T. Batsford.

In 1803 came out *The Cabinet Dictionary: an Explanation of all Terms used in the Cabinet, Chair, and Upholstery Branches*, one volume in fifteen parts. In 1804 Sheraton began *The Cabinet-Maker and General Artist's Encyclopædia*, a folio to be completed in 125 parts, of which the author only lived to publish thirty. The non-completion of this work is not much to be regretted. It contained a large amount of information of a general character, but it was being produced at a time when Sheraton was following the fashion, and doing his very worst furniture designs. There are coloured plates, very crude, of beds with their drapery; sofas, chairs (all of his worst type), and window hangings. Symbolism has him by the throat. One of the windows, 'To the Memory of Lord Nelson, 1806,' has a medallion of the warrior at the top.[1] The curtains, blue in colour, are looped up with anchors, and there are tridents placed about. Through the glass the *Victory* may be seen riding at anchor. We would gladly forget that ever Sheraton had put his hand to such fantasies as this. In excuse it can be urged that the pinch of poverty and the needs of a considerable family must have impelled him towards inventions of which, if he had been a prosperous cabinetmaker such as Chippendale and Heppelwhite were, he would never have had such nightmare dreams. There is a parallel instance to be found. Few would have suspected that the inimitable Clodion, sculptor of those groups of satyrs and nymphs which abound in grace and suppleness and life, would have outdone the 'patriot' artists

[1] Mr. Percy Willett, of Brighton, possesses a very beautiful Sheraton sideboard, the brass drop handles of which are stamped with the design of a funeral monument, and the words 'Sacred to Nelson'—a proof of the extent to which patriotic pride was evinced in cabinetmaking.

of the French Revolution with a pompous 'Deluge' in their own Davidian style. Yet these two tragedies of art were being enacted almost at the self-same time. A page of botanical drawings of all kinds of small details in the *Encyclopædia* shows what a minute and careful draughtsman Sheraton was. In this respect he is certainly the king of the furniture designers proper.

All these books were published by subscription, supporters being found in Ireland as well as England and Scotland, but none were financially successful. Sheraton eked out his income by teaching drawing, and was still true to his religious leanings if poverty compelled him to be faithless to true art. All his life he was an occasional preacher in Baptist chapels, and wrote upon religious subjects. He died October 22, 1806, leaving his family but ill provided for. There is a touching reference to his want of worldly success to be found at the end of an important passage in the *Cabinet Dictionary*. The whole is worth quoting, as illustrative at once of the naïveté and the patriotism of Sheraton's character—that characteristic which was to be expressed 'upholsterously' later in the Nelson window! Speaking of French cabinetmaking, he says, it 'is more strikingly improved than any other branch of mechanical trade whatever. Yet I pretend not to say that this is the surest symptom of the future flourishing state of that kingdom.' He goes on to praise the French system of artistic direction (such as that of Lebrun under Louis XIV. at the Gobelins), 'so that the work may not be executed in a bad style,' but he advises English craftsmen not to be led away by French fashions, but to improve their own. 'After all,' he asserts, 'I am of opinion that if our noblemen and gentry would contribute . . . to the encouragement of a national brass foundry, . . . we might have as elegant brass-work for cabinets cast in London as they have in Paris. It is in this article they excel us, and

by which they set off their cabinet work, which without it would not bear a comparison with ours, neither in design nor in neatness of execution.' Sheraton himself made excellently refined use of unambitious brass-work, and his most famous inlaid pieces show that he had absolutely nothing to learn from France, so we may acquit him of too great a measure of insular pride. But here is the pathetic ending.—'I mention these things with a view to national credit and benefit of trade, and not from my own desire to recommend any extravagant steps in the purchase of grand furniture; for I can assure the reader, though I am thus employed in racking my invention to design fine and pleasing cabinet-work, I can be well content to sit on a wooden bottom chair provided I can but have common food and raiment wherewith to pass through life in peace.' References to him in the *Memoirs of Adam Black*, who in his youth was employed by Sheraton, and became Lord Provost of Edinburgh, seem to show that want of business faculty was Sheraton's undoing. 'Sheraton lived in a poor street in London, his house half shop, half dwelling-house; and looked himself like a Methodist preacher worn out, with threadbare black coat. I took tea with them one afternoon. There was a cup and saucer for the host, and another for his wife, and a little porringer for their daughter. The wife's cup and saucer were given to me, and she had to put up with another little porringer. My host seemed a good man, with some talent. He had been a cabinetmaker, and was now author, publisher, and teacher of drawing, and, I believe, occasionally preacher.' When Black got to know Sheraton better, he thus describes him: 'This many-sided, worn-out encyclopædist and preacher is an interesting character. . . . He is a man of talent, and, I believe, of genuine piety. He understands the cabinet business—I believe was bred to it. He is a scholar, writes well, and, in my opinion, draws mas-

terly; is author, bookseller, and teacher. I believe his abilities and resources are his ruin in this respect—by attempting to do everything he does nothing.'

The versatility of Sheraton in designing is far greater than that of Heppelwhite, and may be compared with Chippendale's. He far exceeds any of the furniture-book authors in literary skill, and the correctness of his principles peeps out in his advice to upholsterers. The *Cabinet Dictionary* contains some of his heaviest designs on its eighty-eight copper-plates, but the letterpress is often good. Under the article 'Furnish,' we are told that—'. . . In furnishing a good house for a person of rank it requires some taste and judgment, that each apartment may have such pieces as is most agreeable to the appropriate use of the room. And particular regard is to be paid to the quality of those who order a house to be furnished, when such order is left to the judgment of the upholsterers; and when any gentleman is so vain and ambitious as to order the furnishing of his house in a style superior to his fortune and rank, it will be prudent in an upholsterer, by some gentle hints, to direct his choice to a more moderate plan.' He descants at length on the proper kind of pictures to have, and the way to hang them. 'It is to be lamented that both the pictures and prints of some gentlemen are but too sure indications of their looseness of principle.'

'The large sideboard inclosed or surrounded with Ionic pillars; the handsome and extensive dining-table; the respectable and substantial-looking chairs; the large face-glass; the family portraits; the marble fireplaces, and the Wilton carpet, are the furniture that should supply the dining-room.' 'Handsome,' 'respectable,' 'large,' all these perfectly appropriate epithets recall again that description by Jane Austen of the dining-room in *Mansfield Park* which sums it up so well.

'The drawing-room,' Sheraton ordains, 'is to concentrate the elegance of the whole house, and is the highest display of richness of furniture. It being appropriated to the formal visits of the highest in rank, (and) nothing of a scientific nature should be introduced to take up the attention of any individual from the general conversation that takes place on such occasions. Hence, the walls should be free of pictures, the tables not lined with books, nor the angles of the room filled with globes; as the design of such meetings are not that each visitant should turn to his favourite study, but to contribute his part towards the amusement of the whole company. The grandeur then introduced into the drawing-room is not to be considered as the ostentatious parade of its proprietor, but the respect he pays to the rank of his visitant.' All this comes under the heading 'Furnish.' Under 'Drawing-Room' we are told that 'the furniture used in a drawing-room are sofas, chairs to match, a commode, pier-tables, elegant fire-screens, large glasses, figures with lights in their hands, and bronzes with lights on the cap of the chimneypiece, or on the pier-tables and commodes, and sometimes mirrors with lights fixed at the end of the room, or the side, as may best suit for the reflection or perspective representation of the room on the surface of the mirror.' It may be objected that this is excessively conventional, but we have to remember that Sheraton is writing expressly for the upholsterer, giving him a set of general rules based upon practice. It would have been very unsafe to leave the purveyor of furniture to his own original devices, and very unsatisfactory to the vast majority of his perfectly conventional patrons.

At least one hundred pages of this work are devoted to perspective and painting, of which Sheraton makes as great a parade as his predecessors did with the 'Five Orders,' with more excuse in a Cabinet Dictionary than Chippendale in his book of designs.

The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing-Book, to the third edition (1802) of which I refer, has a frontispiece which requires a whole paragraph of explanation. Geometry stands on a rock conversing with Perspective. On the left, seated near the window, is an artist busy in designing. The back figure is Architecture measuring the shaft of a Tuscan column, and in the background is the Temple of Fame to which a knowledge of these arts directly leads. Sheraton addresses his preface 'To Cabinet-Makers and Upholsterers in general.' He quarrels with Chippendale for leaving out in his last edition the plates of the two chairs, dressing-table, and bookcase, set out in perspective, which appear in the first edition, but he quotes Chippendale upon the importance of perspective. Ince and Mayhew's, he says, is 'a book of merit in its day.' Writing in 1793, he affirms that Heppelwhite's book (1788) has 'already caught the decline, if we compare some of the designs, particularly the chairs, with the newest taste.' This is one of the rather unhandsome statements concerning Heppelwhite of which Sheraton is guilty. Some of his chairs (cf. Plate CXXXVI.2) are so remarkably akin to those of Heppelwhite that the opinion he expresses is either uncalled for or reflects upon his own work. Plate 44 in the *Drawing-Book*, a design for a writing-table, may be compared with that by Heppelwhite in the *Book of Prices*. It has not the pretty leg stretchers of Heppelwhite's design, but is otherwise very similar. As to the *Book of Prices*, he remarks that it 'lays claim to merit and does honour to the publishers.' It is curious that he does not seem to have noticed that Heppelwhite had to do with it, for he says, 'it may be observed with justice that these designs are more fashionable and useful than his (in Heppelwhite's book) in proportion to their numbers.' He seems to have entertained a little touch of unchristian jealousy towards Heppelwhite. In a footnote to his query

whether the authors of the *Prices* 'had the advantage of seeing Heppelwhite's book before theirs was published,' he says: 'This is not meant to insinuate any disrespectful ideas of the abilities of those who drew the designs in the *Cabinet-Maker's Book of Prices.* I doubt not but they were capable of doing more than Heppelwhite has done, without the advantage of seeing his book; and it may be, for anything I know, that the advantage was given on their side.' As we know, Heppelwhite and Shearer collaborated in the *Book of Prices*, and there is not much doubt that Heppelwhite was the more versatile of the two.

Not till we arrive at page 350 are we rid of the perspective treatise, and then comes Part III., 'Furniture in General.' One paragraph of his introduction is worth quoting, as proving that Sheraton was not, at any rate when he published this, a practical wood-worker, but the brain of many such. 'In conversing with cabinet-makers I find no one individual equally experienced in every job of work. There are certain pieces made in one shop which are not manufactured in another, on which account the best of workmen are sometimes strangers to particular pieces of furniture. For this reason I have made it my business to apply to the best workmen in different shops, to obtain their assistance in the explanation of such pieces as they have been most acquainted with. And in general my request has been complied with, from the generous motive of making the book as generally useful as possible.'

A few things may be noticed in the letterpress and plates of the *Drawing-Book.* To show that Sheraton was not above accepting a point from any quarter, I quote his remark about a 'Summer Bed in two compartments,'—'intended for a nobleman or gentleman and his lady to sleep in separately in hot weather.' Of this design he observes: 'The first idea of this bed was

communicated to me by Mr. Thomson, groom of the household furniture to the Duke of York.'

Plates 54 and 56 are another proof that the term Pembroke table is an extremely comprehensive one. In the first we find that it need not necessarily stand on two X supports, but may be on a central pillar with four claw-feet. In this plate it may be parenthetically observed that there are carefully thrown cast shadows on the floor, a detail included, no doubt, by Sheraton to show the artistic usefulness of the perspective of lines and shadows upon which he has expended so many pages of theory. In Plate 56 the Harlequin Pembroke table shows that almost anything can be called a Pembroke, for it has four tapering legs. The entire elaborate mechanism is drawn out and described. In the appendix to the *Drawing-Book* the first design is 'an elliptic bed for a single lady.' 'As fancifulness seems most peculiar to the taste of females,' says its originator, 'I have therefore assigned the use of this bed for a single lady, though it will equally accommodate a single gentleman.' Of the library steps and table he remarks: 'This design was taken from steps that have been made by Mr. Campbell, upholsterer to the Prince of Wales. . . . There are other kinds which I have seen made by other persons, but in my opinion, these must have the decided preference.' Apparently, then, Sheraton does not claim all the designs he offers as his own, but perhaps he was himself the designer of the steps made by Mr. Campbell.

An 'English state bed' gives him a welcome opportunity of revelling in twelve pages of symbolism and its explanations. It is a portentous affair. 'The coronets round the dome are those of the immediate sons and daughters of the King of Great Britain, of which there are thirteen, but the dome being divided into sixteen compartments, still leaves room for an increase of the royal family.' Such thoughtfulness on

the part of the designer deserved a greater share of royal recognition than he appears ever to have obtained.

In 'An Accompaniment' to the *Drawing-Book* Sheraton spends some time in the consideration of figure-drawing, taking, curiously enough, not the proportions of any great master, but those of Cipriani as the basis of his conclusions. If the book loses in present respect on account of the exemplar chosen, it very likely gained in practical attractiveness and popularity at the time, for Cipriani's are figures which largely shared the patronage of the cabinetmakers.

We may conclude with a sound and unaffected piece of advice upon composition. 'Observe breadth,' says the great furniture artist, 'in the parts; shun niggling and meanness, and stick at nothing that will have a comely and pleasant appearance.' The general impression created by these books of Sheraton is that as a writer he was sometimes loose in style and occasionally ungrammatical, but that this was due to haste and not to ignorance. He is unquestionably verbose, but has something to say, with a wider outlook upon art than any of his rivals.

CHAPTER XXII

SHERATON: II

IT is impossible to look through the books of Sheraton and Heppelwhite without noticing the extreme similarity of their simpler designs. The difference between the two men lies in the disposition of Sheraton towards experiment, his inclination to change with the times, and in the fixed *parti pris* of Heppelwhite, the settled determination upon a certain style of sitting-room and bedroom furniture, and the resolve not to depart therefrom. Heppelwhite is limited, Sheraton is versatile and a man of periods. The tendency of Heppelwhite is on the whole towards angularity and straightness. Sheraton shows far more love of contrasting curves and flat fronts. This is even to be noticed in the plainer furniture. He gives us corner basin-stands with rounded or serpentine fronts to a larger extent than his rival. Moreover, Sheraton has the art of making his furniture far more attractive upon paper. If he pulls out a drawer to show its interior fittings, that drawer casts its proper shadow across the front, not, however, disguising what lies within its field. The shadow is transparent and true, and the details within it can be observed almost as well as when they are in the light. The fact is, Sheraton is a much better artist than Heppelwhite, and has absolutely no cause on that score to be jealous of him. It seems probable that the commercial success of the single-aimed Heppelwhite was the envy of the

many-gifted Sheraton, who, as Adam Black said, by attempting to do everything did nothing.

Sheraton's chairs of his early best period are constructed in exactly the same way as those of Heppelwhite. The splat does not reach the seat even when a solid urn reminds one of the jar-shaped splats of Chippendale. His backs are very frequently composed of four, five, or seven uprights, very slender and variously shaped. There is a tendency to place a greater amount of ornament upon them than is the case with Heppelwhite, to whom two or three wheat-ears or a few depending husks seem often a perfectly adequate supply. Whilst he uses the drapery festoons and the serrated leaves of the former, Sheraton gives us also cupids, either whole-length or ending in acanthus-leaved terminal shapes, which require a considerable amount of execution, either in carving or in paint. Sheraton supplied a good number of designs for the latter style, as the descriptions will show (Plate CXXXVII.). One plate alone contains a dozen backs for painted chairs. Sheraton makes even a greater use of turned work than Heppelwhite, who himself is differentiated from Chippendale in this respect. It might perhaps be safe to say that the turned work of Heppelwhite is chiefly confined to legs of tables and chairs and sofas. In Sheraton's designs it is not uncommon on the outer uprights of chair-backs and on legs of sideboards (Plates CXXXIX.3, CXL.). Whilst he gives one or two excellent versions of shield-back chairs—the special prerogative of Heppelwhite—Sheraton shares with Flaxman and the Adams a shape for chair-backs and table supports reminiscent of the lyre, and sometimes so imitative of it as to reproduce the strings in brass (Plate CXXXVI. 1). This is one of his successes, borrowed by him and the others, no doubt, as so many ideas were, from the French style of Louis XVI., where the fancy showed itself in the popular lyre-shaped clock. Few chairs, on the other hand, can

be uglier than his peculiar invention of the Conversation Chair. This design pandered either to the inordinate length of coat tails, or to a freedom of manner which has mostly passed out of use. The idea was that the occupier should sit astride with his face to the back, thus avoiding the difficulty of bestowing his skirts. The seat was made narrower at the back so as to be convenient for the legs, and the top of the back was quite a small table upon which the sitter might fold his arms. In these chairs alone does the splat come down, or nearly down, to the seat, presumably on account of the extra strain to which it was supposed it might be subject. In these two examples of the lyre-back and the conversation chair we have Sheraton at once reaping the reward and paying the penalty of a versatile nature. Heppelwhite seldom, if ever, makes a failure—though some of his shield-shapes are much less graceful than others—but then his narrow range impresses us with a sense of his timidity.

The arms of Sheraton's chair sweep downwards towards their supports with the same easy curve, beginning rather high up the back, as is found in his rival's designs. This method of placing the arms high up is one reason why the chairs of Sheraton and Heppelwhite, though so much lighter than Chippendale's, have yet stood the test of time. The arms give that support to the back which Chippendale relied on the splat to afford. Sheraton and Heppelwhite both use the small upholstered block in the centre of the arm upon which the hands or the elbows were supposed to rest. I cannot but regard this as a rather unhappy invention. This peddling little bit of upholstery tends to shabbiness, and is unnecessary for comfort in a well-designed chair.

Another characteristic of Sheraton is his penchant for draperies. There is a charming cylinder desk and bookcase upon long tapering legs, in which the awkward

junction of the cylinder curve with the low bookcase is avoided by having a concave curve to serve as a plinth to the bookcase. The glass panes are simply divided into four squares in each folding door. At the junction of the dividing lines in the centre is a rosetted diamond. There is no cornice, but an architrave on which appears a continuous series of semi-circles reminding us of the old oak motive mentioned so often before. The curves of these semi-circles are repeated in reverse by draperies inside each glass door. These are caught up so as to make four segments of a circle in all. This is exactly one of those happy little touches of design which show Sheraton's genuine originality. We may not approve of too liberal a use of draperies, but when they are so daintily employed as here, there is certainly something to be said for them. Failure, however, attends it in a very tall 'Bookcase and Writing Drawers.' Here the whole of the glass bookcase is concealed by perpendicular pleated stuff, and, as before, there are two pairs of festoons at the top. But in this case the festoons are more elaborate, with long, loose-falling ends, and there are no semi-circles or segments of circles in the woodwork above to form an answering shape. The result is that, as in so much of Sheraton's later work, we are oppressed by a sense of too much upholstery. The next step, one expects, will be the entire elimination of woodwork, and an adjournment of the furniture designer from the cabinetmaker's to the draper's shop.

In his sofas Sheraton uses the same style of leg and arm as in his chairs. Consequently these details need not detain us. He has a variety of general shapes. One is of the usual settee type, with an arm at each end. The upholstery is not always continuous along the back. In one design there are three upholstered rectangles divided by wooden pillar and curve work, perhaps a not very comfortable invention. In another,

where the upholstery is continuous, he has three rather stiff rectangular cushions arranged at regular intervals along the back. Evidently the sofa with him or his clients was not to be regarded as a lounge. Nor is there much ease in his 'Chaises Longues,' which have a high back at one end, and are either open elsewhere, or else have a back decreasing in height from the head and curling round the foot end. In these designs very much use is made of draperies, and we get a foretaste of that 'roll-over' curve which characterised the formidable 'Grecian Couches' of his later style. These painted and gilt sofas show their author's close approximation to the French style of Louis XVI., a resemblance so marked as to have earned for him the position of a chief interpreter of that manner in England. Rather fortunately, however, for the individuality of Sheraton, he had not that ample supply of chasing talent at hand to decorate his woodwork, though, as we have seen, he has expressed a desire for a national brass foundry. In default of that, Sheraton's brass-work is sparingly used, to the advantage of true art. There is not that conflict to be found in the 'English Louis Seize' of Sheraton between the claims of metal-work and wood which has so often in French furniture led to the ornament of both being overdone.

There is one class of furniture in which he did make a considerable use of comparatively plain brass-work, unlike any of his rivals except the Adams. The main shape of Sheraton's simpler sideboards is very like that of Heppelwhite and Shearer (Plate CXXXIX. 1). In his more ambitious efforts he varies the shaping of the front more than they did, as was the rule with his large bookcases. Whilst Heppelwhite makes detached pedestals for his urns to stand on, Sheraton joins them on to each end of a simple sideboard, and thus makes of it one grandiose piece (Plate CXL.). But the chief distinction which marks his sideboards off is the use of

brass railing at the back. This is arranged either as two horizontal rails, or a straight lower one, and the upper one curved. They are strengthened in the centre by a perpendicular support, which is made use of as a candelabrum for two or more lights on S-curved brackets (Plate CXXXIX.). Sometimes there are brass arms at each end like the arms of a chair, and the use of all this brass-work is to show off dishes or silver-plate, which may be leaned up against it. Occasionally there is a fair amount of scroll-work besides that which supports the candles. Not very many of these side-boards appear to have survived complete. The brass has got bent and tarnished, and has ultimately disappeared, to the no great loss of the rest of the design (Plates CXXXIX., CXL.). In his later fancies the brass-work was of a lattice description, which was not an improvement, tending as it did to remind us of the ordinary brass lattice-work placed over library shelves to ward off the depredations of too enthusiastic book-lovers. Sheraton sometimes recurs to the plain side-board table without any drawers or cupboards, and in one of his drawings he evinces that tendency to occasional failure in a perfectly absurd 'Mahogany Vase underneath to hold Bottles,' from the mouth of which volcanic flames are being belched forth impossibly. This is to be found in *The Drawing-Book*, to which we are chiefly confining ourselves at present. It is preferable to show Sheraton at his best and to refer later to those developments which we cannot but deplore.

Perfectly charming is he in those bijou pieces with which he shows his genius for catching feminine taste (Plate CXLVII.). Not Chippendale or Heppelwhite can rival him in this field, though the one in some few of his lighter tables and screens, the other in a work-table or two of the simpler kind, has produced an elegant result. Sheraton's high-water mark is reached in these

delightful inventions, so daintily silhouetted, so prettily inlaid with detail.

A most beautiful specimen, veneered and inlaid with satin and other woods, of which an illustration is given (Plate CXLIX.), belonged to the late Mr. Henry Willett, of Arnold House, Brighton. If any proof were required that English inlay and cabinet-making could hold its own with that of France, this cabinet would afford it. Its total height is about six feet, breadth four and a half, depth two and a quarter. The finial at the top consists of a bust of a youthful Bacchus excellently chiselled in ormolu, with vine leaves and grapes in his hair. There is an ormolu scroll-work bulwark of good quality at each end of the top shelf, which has on its surface two ovals of dark inlay, and is bordered with tulip. Four drawers with serpentine fronts, chiefly of mahogany, rise one above the other on each side of a cupboard with two folding doors. In the illustration these folding doors are absent, having been temporarily removed, and the pigeon-holes are visible. The three upper drawers on each side are inlaid with oak leaf and acorn designs, the lower drawers with the short upright flute, shaded. There is an ingenious arrangement for disguising access to the drawers. The stiles or jambs between them and the cupboard doors are inlaid Corinthian pillars above, and vine and grape inlaid flats below. Each of these slides upwards, and discloses a keyhole governing one set of four drawers. The circular ring handles of these have round them an elaborate little inlaid laurel wreath. The removed cupboard doors are flat, and below the pigeon-holes, but unseen in the illustration is another drawer.

In the lower part of the cabinet, the top slab, which projects a good way beyond the upper cupboard and drawers, is bordered with tulip and has a massive ormolu moulded edge. Like the upper shelf, this slab is inlaid, and on a more elaborate scale. There are

scallop and fleur-de-lys shapes, mistletoe and olive wreaths. The main feature is a vase with a carnation in it, from which scrolls branch out on either side. There are green leaf swags stretching across the vase.

The bowed or semi-circular front of the lower portion of the cabinet is divided by stiles and a horizontal ormolu beading into six main panels. The upper ones, to left and right, have urns with handles of lions holding swags in their mouths. The swags are held at the other end by tied bows, from which hang cornucopia shapes and draperies. The stiles dividing these panels from the centre one are of dark wood, banded with tulip and thin boxwood lines, and are mounted with ormolu tied bows and straight hanging leaf ornaments. The central panel consists of two cupboard doors which slide sideways. Its chief ornament is a dark circle, with a broad and shallow urn with dragons' head handles, the whole minutely inlaid. There is a large scroll, with a peacock holding a swag in its beak, filling up the rest of the panel on each side. A very pretty motive is to be noticed here. All the swags in the three upper panels have pendent drops graduated in size, and hanging close together by their threads of inlay. These resemble necklaces, and are a motive borrowed from the designs of Jacques Androuet, '*du Cerceau*.'

In the lower three panels those to left and right are cupboards. The stiles have changed from dark above to light below, and have honeysuckle and bell-flower patterns of their own.

The middle of the upper part in the lower portion of the cabinet, when slid back, discloses a set of four pigeon-holes, two on each side, divided by a little cupboard prettily inlaid, and also painted with leaves in green and pink flowers. The lower part of this cupboard is a false drawer, and in this is the keyhole. The base of the cupboard is parquetted with diamond and

circle inlay. Below each set of pigeon-holes are one long and two shallow drawers. When the sliding panels are opened the parquetted base draws out, bringing all the drawers forward, and forming a writing-place to sit at. This can be slanted for drawing or reading.

There are three large drawers with oval drop-handles in the centre of the lower portion, below the sliding panels, and their inlay forms one design. It consists chiefly of an oval with two cherubs in light wood on clouds in darker shaded wood. There are the usual attributes of lyres, wreaths, trumpets of fame, and doves. The large oval is banded with tulip and enclosed in a ground of darker hue, perhaps harewood. The ground is inlaid with entwined scrolls of leafage, with acanthus shapes in the corners. The thick fronts of these three large drawers are veneered upon a light-coloured wood. The lower edge is moulded with ormolu jutting out when it passes over the stiles, which project half an inch. The four taper legs, about one foot high, are reeded each side, light on dark, and are shod with elegant little brass feet.

This is but a perfunctory account of a beautiful piece of work. The only point to which artistic exception might perhaps be taken is the shape of the upper part above the shelf, where the edge curves up to the bust. Excepting that, the endless variety and counter-change of coloured woods and decorative motives, with the surprises of the interior fittings, and above all the breadth and 'keeping' of the general scheme, in spite of so much minute detail, cannot be too much admired.

To be compared with it, as far as inlay is concerned, are a pair of commodes with semi-circular fronts in the possession of Miss Vincent, Royal Victoria Hotel, Swanage, Dorset (Plate CXLVIII.). These have not the ingenuity of interior fitting which is a conspicuous

feature of Mr. Willett's cabinet, but their inlaid ornament is equally elaborate and beautiful. Scrolls, flowers, terminal figures, and figures of dogs and swans, doves and peacocks, all in the best style of inlay, and with most delicate pencilling of feathers, and other small detail, make up a perfect ensemble. As in Mr. Willett's cabinet, so in this, there appears the design of birds holding necklaces at one end in their beaks. The commodes are on rectangular tapering legs nine inches long, and in shape resemble Mr. Willett's cabinet if its upper portion were removed. It appears almost incredible, but it is a fact that these beautiful objects were, until not many years back, covered with a coating of brown paint. The exquisite inlay was almost entirely concealed. There was no reason arising from bad condition to account for this extraordinary treatment, the cause of which remains a mystery. It is possible that elsewhere there may exist masterpieces of Sheraton's art which have been disguised in a similar manner. Another case is known to the writer.

It is somewhat strange that in none of the pattern-books does a design appear for an upright secrétaire, that commodious piece of furniture the shape of which was borrowed direct from France.[1] Yet many exist in England which may be said to be of the style of Sheraton or Heppelwhite, some of mahogany with the usual shell or vase of flowers inlaid, others more elaborate and of harewood or even satin-wood with panels of Japanese lacquer. There is a fall-down front with a shallow drawer above and a cupboard below. Sometimes they have ormolu mounts in the French style, and occasionally the ring handles have plates made of Battersea enamels. These were also used for the fittings of mirrors of the flat shape sawn out in

[1] A fine specimen of inlaid satin, hare, and other woods, with lacquer panels, was sold by Lord Henry Thynne at Christie's, June 20, 1899.

mahogany and slightly gilt, of which illustrations are given in Plate LXXXII. They rested upon knobs fixed into the wall, and on these knobs the Battersea enamels appeared. Mrs. Morse in *Furniture of the Olden Time* notes that the head of Lord Nelson appears upon a pair in her possession. This will remind us of the brass handles, 'Sacred to Nelson,' of Mr. Percy Willett's Sheraton sideboard. In connection with these cheaper mahogany mirrors may be mentioned the cheaper wall knife-boxes, which some persons call receptacles for salt or candles. It is extremely unlikely that inlaid boxes would have been made for such a purpose. The shape of these boxes is rather that of the long end of a coffin. A 'term-shaped' one of this kind measures 13½ inches from the hinged lid to the bottom. It tapers from 7 inches at the lid to 4½ inches below. At the back of the lid and above it is open fret-work 6½ inches high by which it may be conveniently hung on a nail. It is of mahogany with strap-work inlay and a very good shell.

At about the period 1780-1790 at which mirrors with the American eagle were popular, it was the fashion to use glass, blackened and gilt at the back, or else painted, as an ornament for the upper parts. I have also seen a commode with glass panels of this description, and they were a great blot on the design. Occasionally Worcester china plaques were used, as on a tea-caddy sold at Christie's some little time back. All these extraneous materials are to be deprecated upon furniture. The Wedgwood plaque alone occasionally looks well upon satin-wood examples (Plate CL.).

CHAPTER XXIII

SHERATON: III; AND AFTER

THE happiest combinations of the artistic with the mechanical are found in Sheraton's library and bedroom furniture. Some of the former is designed mainly for usefulness, as in the case of his drawing-tables and tables with library steps. A drawing-table is on four taper legs, has a drawer with fittings in the frame, and a movable slanting top. On the right-hand side is a slide for a candlestick stand. The library steps, by an ingenious arrangement, double up and disappear inside the frame of the table upon which their upper part, when extended, rests. The table is on serviceable casters, so that the whole affair was perhaps less cumbersome than it might appear at first. A still more elaborate type replaces the simple pole hand-rest of the first by a hand-rail on the right side of the steps, and a desk projecting at the top, upon which a book for reference may be temporarily placed. The whole is a very clever piece of folding mechanism, and is hidden, when closed, under the top of the table, which lifts up with a hinge on one side. The only indication of its peculiar use is the fact that the legs are thicker than usual.

This system of disappearing steps and book-rests is a favourite one with Sheraton. An oval library table considerably adorned with inlay is based upon a pair of cupboards with open space between them, and has drawers in the frame above. In two of these

drawers are concealed book-rests. Another of similar general shape, but without the open knee-space, has a complete secrétaire with the usual pigeon-holes in its central part, and drawers below. From the oval ends shaped drawers pull out, as in the first instance, but instead of the book-rests there is a large drawing-board, which lifts up from the top and can be slanted to any angle.

I must not omit to mention the Universal table and the Harlequin Pembroke table. The former is plain and severe, with interior 'surprise' fittings; but the Harlequin (of which it is well to remember that Shearer made a pretty version) is a very elegant table, the chief characteristic of which is a series of pigeon-holes and small drawers which rise and fall in the top of the table as required.

In bedroom furniture some very charming designs were made by Sheraton. Their chief aim is, of course, to appear anything but what they are, in consideration of the constant use then made of a bedroom as a reception or sitting room. A lady's 'Dressing Commode' has a centre, bow-fronted, and two flat wings. The top of the centre lifts up on a hinge, and discloses the usual 'furniture drawer' fittings with an adjustable mirror. In the top of the right wing is a small writing-desk, adjustable also, with ink-pots and other fittings. On the left wing is the exiguous basin which seems to have been all that our grandmothers required for ordinary use. The bow centre shows double folding doors, and the wings a tier of four drawer fronts, as to which we may conclude that the interior was the exact opposite of what it appears to be.

All these appliances, without the artistic adornments, are to be found on more severe and rectangular bedroom pieces; but even these, though when open for use rather too machine-like, are, when closed, most pleasant to look at. The fine wood, the fine work-

manship, and the pretty ring handles, are sufficient in themselves to be attractive (Plates CLIII., CLIV.).

Of Sheraton's beds it is not necessary to speak at length. They depend so much for their effect upon draping that they are scarcely to be reckoned as within the cabinetmaker's province. Almost any framework would have sufficed for the very skilful arrangements of stuffs in which Sheraton seems to have delighted. It is true that here and there, as in a 'Sofa Bed,' a bit of woodwork is to be seen, and in this particular case it is Louis Seize in style. Like Dr. Johnson, who in his reports of debates took care that the Whigs should not have it all their own way, the patriotic Sheraton is careful to make his English state-bed—to which we have already referred—a much finer thing than its French compeer. As neither of them, nor the 'Elliptic Bed for a single lady,' was probably ever constructed, we may pass them by, simply noting that though they do not agree with our ideas of what is suitable for a healthy bedroom, they show a skill in the arrangement of draped lines which no one has ever surpassed. Chippendale's draperies are on the whole more stiffly drawn, whilst Heppelwhite's are by no means so ambitious.

Passing now to less important furniture, we find that Sheraton lavished a great deal of inlay upon his tall clock cases. These very frequently have very slender detached pillars on each side of the clock face, and some are finished with rather ugly finials at the top and sides of semi-circular pediments. This finial resembles a mop-head with a small sprig of leafage—like a miniature fir-tree—growing out of the top. The mop-head really consists of an arrangement of the acanthus which Sheraton calls 'the Roman leaf,' set four together with the ends turned downwards. In some instances the detached pillars run down the body of the case. In others the object of varying the

long straightness is obtained by spreading the case out with a slight convex curve. A hollow moulding generally joins the body to the plinth, which has small finials on its corners. The lyre and the 'dish-clout,' or draperies caught up, as in the other furniture, reappear in the clocks. The tendency of these at this date and later was to become very squat, and many so-called Sheraton clocks are extremely disproportioned objects. Some of his own actual designs are rather straight-sided, the body being nearly as broad as the face-part of the clock. In an existing and rather elaborately inlaid example the face, with its applied pilasters, is too low and broad, and is somewhat overpowered by a largish urn as centre finial, with two slender ones at the sides. This clock has reeded pilasters on the body, their bases standing upon an imitation in mahogany of 'rusticated' masonry, of which the architects of the century were so fond. Its representation in mahogany cannot be regarded as a success. Plate CLV. represents a tall sideboard clock in mahogany of a peculiar type, with a small oval painting framed in pierced brass-work at the top in the style of Cipriani or Angelica Kauffmann, and 'scroll' feet of brass. It might be the work of either Shearer, Heppelwhite, or Sheraton, and perhaps is not later than 1780.

Sheraton's card-tables (Plates CXLI., CXLIII.) have the same rectangular and tapering, or else turned legs, as his other furniture. The tops are often considerably shaped with curves and re-entering angles. A very pretty little object is his screen-table, which often also has a hanging work-bag, or, as Sheraton calls it, a 'pouch,' underneath. This, in fact, is necessary, if the screen, when lowered, is not to be visible below the table top. The work-bag is tacked to a framing which slides out at one side, and there may also be beneath the table top a slide for writing, covered with green cloth, and which draws out in front. If there is a drawer, it

will be under the writing slide and above the framing from which the work-bag hangs.

This type appears far more elegant than that of the work-tables which have oval, or circular, or even kidney-shaped tops, and are based either upon a single column and tripod feet, or else upon horse-legs, that is, two parallel trestles. A kidney-topped table in the drawing-book rests on two lyre supports and horse-legs joined by a shaped tray as cross-piece. There is too large a use of draperies hanging from the table-top for a legitimately designed piece of furniture. In course of time these draperies have disappeared, and the tables look the better for the loss of them. One or two of those belonging to the Earl of Ancaster at Normanton Park have, I fancy, been treated in this manner (Plates CXXXIII., CXXXIV., CXXXV.).

In 'Horse' fire-screens, which appellation may, by the way, seemingly be applied even to those upon one standard with a tripod, Sheraton was both successful and unsuccessful. One is decorated with a large lyre in wood-work laid on the rectangular flat of the screen. Large mop-head finials grace the two ends of the top, and are answered by short broad tassels below. From the horns of the lyre hang heavy swags of flowers. A pleasant contrast to this is a much lighter-looking screen upon the regulation trestle legs, with a shield shape within the rectangle formed between the uprights. His pole-screens are apt to be so skimpy that they can have been but of very little practical use. They are shield-shaped, or almond-shaped, with scalloped edges, or otherwise fancifully formed, and the pole is based on slender tripod legs with one or two cross-trays or stretchers to make rigid their concave curves. Shearer's screen writing-table finds its echo in a 'Horse Dressing-Glass and Writing-Table.' The writing part is contained in a fall-down front, which then discloses an oval glass. There are candle-

brackets on each side, and the whole is on lyre supports with trestle feet. A much more charming design is that for a lady's writing-table on the usual four tapering legs. This has the rising screen of a work-table, as before described, behind it. There is a bulwark round three sides of the table top. On the left and right are boxed-in supports for candle-brackets, and in pivoted swing-drawers, fitting into these covered places, are found the ink and pens. This is a very usual arrangement in tables of this kind, and leaves extra room in the drawers below. Beautiful instances of ladies' writing-cabinets are given in Plates CXLVII. and CLIV.

It is needless to say that Sheraton more than held his own in such smaller objects as tea-caddies and knife-boxes. These last of his, with their more varied fronts than those of Heppelwhite, are perhaps the most desirable of any.

It is necessary briefly to notice those later designs (Plate CLVIII.) of Sheraton made after 1800, and published, after his death, in 1812, all together, the existence of which for the most part it is impossible not to regret. The worst are so infinitely removed in manner from the graceful inventions of his earlier style that it is difficult to believe them to be the outcome of his own untrammelled genius. Pitiable though it is to admit that he followed the fashion, that belief is preferable to imagining that Sheraton invented these later objects in perfectly good faith. Moreover, they are so obviously based upon the Empire style, that we may be excused for attributing their enormities not so much to our English designer as to the bad taste of that society which had sprung up in France after the destruction of the old and cultivated nobility. However this may be, it is undeniable that whereas in his best period Sheraton was able to avoid—for lack of brass-chasers—some

of the *clinquant* of French furniture, in many of his later Empire designs he has produced almost the worst of which that manner is capable.

A particularly bad feature is to be noticed in the legs of the chairs. These are no longer straight, either tapered or turned, but coarsely curved, the concave on the outside. By comparison with the old cabriole leg they are extremely ugly, the contrast and look of strength afforded by the convex upper part of the cabriole leg changing to the slender concave below, being entirely absent. The design is not much helped by the drawing, which appears to me inferior to that of Sheraton's earlier work. As a rule, upright splats are avoided, their place being taken by curved shapes, either open or solid, placed horizontally. One chair has the top of its back straight above and curved below. There is a leaf moulding running round the curve and terminating in eagles' heads at both ends. These project above the straight top, and face each so as to be seen from the front in profile. Another similar arrangement shows a pair of dolphins facing each other, and with an Egyptian head between. Their tails cross and form a circle on the lower cross-rail of the back.

Occasionally the ordinary front legs of the chair are replaced by one curved 8-shaped support. More uncomfortable than any must have been the camel-backed chair. This is really ridiculous. The back is formed of two realistic camels looking away from each other. Where their bodies and hind legs should have met, a drapery hangs, though the space allowed would have been insufficient to accommodate both animals. The front legs of this wonderful invention are lion-headed cabrioles with odd-shaped caps or crowns upon them. There is much mane running down the leg, and the same drapery arrangement as on the back. Another version shows eagles at the back, and jackals, perhaps, on the front legs. Most of these out-of-the-way designs

have hollow or dipping seats. All of them are described as parlour and drawing-room chairs.

Then we come to 'Herculaneums,' which are of very much the same class, but not so naturalistic, their ornament being based upon Roman details. Amongst plainer things there is a tub or easy-chair, with projecting ear-pieces, as in what are known as 'Grandfather chairs.' Sheraton's tub-chair seems, however, to be made of wood, whilst the other with Heppelwhite is upholstered. 'A Fauteuil chair' is much more graceful and worthy of his early period. Unfortunately this and a Bergère chair are only exceptions, for as we turn over the page we come to Nelson's chairs, which are all anchors and dolphins—a worse version of the conversation chair than that of his earlier period, and then Grecian sofas and couches. These are the original of that couch with ends rolling over outwards and upholstered in horse-hair with a cylindrical horse-hair bolster, with which we were familiar, many of us, in our youth, and which are still to be found in many a lodging-house. Sheraton's are, of course, more ornamental, but the type is unmistakable.

There are welcome echoes of his best time to be found amongst the designs for cabinets and ladies' writing- and dressing-tables, but too much formal inlay is to be found upon them, in place of the fine scrolls of the earlier period. The glazed doors are frequently covered with brass lattice, or else merely two lines crossing each other diagonally, in place of the more varied glazing patterns with curves and other geometrical shapes. Every now and then a thoroughly common-looking head, either Egyptian, or, presumably, Gothic, with a crown, is found as a finish to a cabinet or bookcase leg or the top of a fire-screen. Perhaps the *reductio ad absurdum* is reached in a Gothic Light. This has a heavy tripod base with the inevitable grotesque lions' heads and paws. On this rests a

slender open pointed arch. Between the pillars is a niche with a round top. This contains a female figure with an astonishing head-dress, a necklace, and a shawl crossed over her bosom exactly as our great-grandmothers are represented in miniatures of the period. The 'Chinese Light' is a suitable companion. She wears the conical hat dedicated to all Chinese-English figures, and stands with hands on two pilasters terminating in spear-heads, and entwined with serpents eating the flowers which grow below the spear-heads.

I prefer to believe that these inventions must have been amongst the last which the disappointed and struggling artist racked his brain to evolve. That his ingenuity had not flown with his taste is proved by the Cylinder writing-tables, based on trestle feet, and the various narrow and long 'Sofa-tables' shaped so as to be convenient for placing alongside of a sofa, and also supported upon trestle or 'horse' feet. To Sheraton perhaps we may ascribe the invention also of those useful little occasional-tables made in 'nests' or series, and dwindling in size so as to fit one inside the other. These he calls Quartetto tables, and they are as light and almost as graceful as if they belonged to his best period. I have seen a set in imitation of Japanese lacquer.

A 'New design for a dining-table' has a huge dumb waiter in the centre. The circular shape of this table, and the use in other designs of a thick central pillar on four concave-curved or lion's-paw feet, gives colour to the idea that Sheraton may have introduced the fashion of these circular tables, so much in vogue during the early nineteenth century. Jane Austen refers to them in *Emma*, which was written between 1811 and 1816, and appeared in the latter year. In chapter xli. she writes: 'Mr. Knightley must take his seat with the rest round the large modern circular table which Emma had introduced at Hartfield, and which none but Emma

could have had power to place there and persuade her father to use, instead of the small-sized Pembroke, on which two of his daily meals had for forty years been crowded.' They are certainly not so adaptable as the 'set of dining-tables' consisting of a centre and two ends, which held their own against the circular shape until the modern heavy telescope-table with extra leaves was invented. This, as we learn from Mr. Litchfield's *Illustrated History of Furniture*, was patented by Richard Gillow in 1800. The auctioneers' description of this as a 'set of dining-tables,' Mr. Litchfield observes, is 'probably a survival of the older method of providing for a dinner-party.' The 'pillar and claw' tables could be set together or separated as the case required. The end pieces were made semi-circular, and could be used as side-tables set against the wall.

It is hardly necessary to follow Sheraton through the decadence of his French, Grecian, alcove, and canopy beds, or of his 'New French' and other window draperies. Serpents may be found coiling about window tops, and curtains looped up with half moons. One of the worst windows has huge lions' heads to take the curtain loops, while down each side of the window from above hangs a series of globular shapes formed by bows tied at intervals on a long loosely stuffed cylinder of drapery. The effect is that of so many pudding-bags. There is consolation to be found in the probability that not a tithe of these worst designs ever advanced beyond the paper stage. If they did, they have disappeared into that limbo which is devoted to things not deserving to survive.

We must remember that the publishing of a book of designs is apt to give a furniture-maker a prominence in a history of furniture, which, if the work of forgotten makers, or of those who did not publish

books, could be all identified, would be found excessive. If the long-standing firm of Gillow were to publish their records, much might be learned of interest. These date from 1724, but the firm is said to have existed even before that date. It is at the present time producing, amongst other things, beautiful replicas of works originally made a hundred years ago. To Gillow's may be attributed much of that rosewood or mahogany furniture inlaid with brass which was popular at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and which it is the custom to call 'late Sheraton.' The list of subscribers to the books of the latter tells us the names of a great number of cabinetmakers, many of whom shared court patronage with those better remembered. They executed work fully as elaborate as anything designed by Sheraton or Heppelwhite or Chippendale. Illustrations are here given (Plate CLVII.) of perhaps the most monumental existing piece of English furniture. It is an interesting example in many ways, but chiefly as showing how in the fulness of time England paid back to the Continent the artistic coin she had borrowed. Side by side with it we may set the so-called 'Tudor Cabinet' of pearwood, No. 27 in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Plate CLVI.). When that was commissioned we had no one in England who was equal to the task of producing a sumptuous piece of furniture. Close upon two hundred years later, when a Spanish king requires a grandiose piece, he has recourse to England for the fulfilment of his needs. The makers of this were Seddon Sons and Shackleton, cabinetmakers to George IV., and rivals of Gillow's. It is a bureau, jewel-case, dressing-table, and organ all in one. The design is by Sir W. Chambers, and the painted decorations are by W. Hamilton, R.A. The former died in 1796, and the date of this cabinet is well within the eighteenth century. It was made to the order of Charles IV. of Spain, and was actually completed on

June 28, 1793. The principal cabinetmaker belonging to the firm was in all probability R. Newham, whose name with the date quoted is also written inside. The height is nine feet, extreme breadth six feet, and depth three feet. Upon it are painted representations of the order of the Golden Fleece, and the Immaculate Conception in a riband carried by cupids. The other panels represent the Four Seasons, Fire and Water, Night and Morning, Juno in a car drawn by peacocks, Ceres in a car drawn by lions, and five cupids in separate small panels. In the domed top is an organ with outside case of ormolu and a Wedgwood plaque. Below this are pigeon-holes concealed by cupboards. The mouldings and edgings are of fine ormolu. The side pedestals and cupboards below have plain interiors. The bureau and dressing-table has a large mirror and all kinds of fittings, either sliding or swinging on pivots. The chest of drawers below has cupboard doors. The carving of the figure-work is extremely skilful, the main surface of the cabinet being satin-wood. It is in the possession of Mr. R. W. Partridge, St. James's Street.

After 1800 the fashion for furniture in the classic style was fostered by Thomas Hope, whose ideas, however much approved by J. T. Smith, the author of *Nollekens and his Times*, in the passage referring to Chippendale, quoted before, would if put into thorough practice have produced rooms in private houses aping the Egyptian and Roman galleries of the British Museum. Egyptian friezes, Roman chairs and couches, Egyptian standing figures, and even recumbent mummy cases, are all to be found in a design for a room in the classic style designed by Hope in 1807. About the same date J. Smith, 'Upholder' to the Prince of Wales, published a book of designs in the same manner, but with the restoration of the monarchy in France, whence the classical style of the empire had come, it died out,

and gave place to that renewal of the rococo which J. T. Smith had predicted in 1828, when he condemned Chippendale for his French proclivities. Henceforth the art of designing furniture went from bad to worse, the Gothic revival of Pugin notwithstanding. What sort of pattern-book was the successor of Chippendale, Heppelwhite, and Sheraton may be gathered from *The Modern Style of Cabinet-Work Exemplified*, the second edition of which came out in 1831. Only the name of a publisher, T. King, appears on the title-page. 'Novelty and Practicability constitute the present Designs; in which originality generally pervades; . . . the English style is carefully blended with Parisian taste, . . . and a chaste contour and simplicity of parts is attempted in all the objects.' So runs the 'Address,' and the plates show that this book is the exemplar of the thoroughly debased heavy mahogany period of the early nineteenth century.

CHAPTER XXIV

NOTES ON THE MATERIALS, MANUFACTURE, AND CARE OF FURNITURE

THE periods of English furniture might roughly be named after the woods of which at different epochs it was mainly constructed. It would naturally be found that just as the style of one period overlaps that of another, the materials popular in an early time continue to be frequently used at later dates. Making this very broad allowance, we may divide our field into three main portions and call them after Oak, Walnut, and Mahogany. This last class may be understood to include furniture veneered or inlaid with satin and other woods, made in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The room in which I am writing contains examples of all three, and also specimens of the overlap. There is, first of all, an oak chest belonging to what has been referred to in these pages as the old oak period. It extends from the earliest date, of which there are any examples remaining, down to the later Stuart epoch. Of the later Stuart, and William and Anne, or 'Walnut Period,' a child's arm-chair is evidence, and that also contains a material—cane—which may be said never to belong to the oak period proper. Be it remembered, however, that oak chairs of the Stuart style are common enough. The third, or mahogany period, dating from about 1720, is exemplified by chairs in the style of Chippendale, and a bureau book-

case. Instances of the overlap are excellently afforded by a Welsh dresser which is mainly constructed of oak, but is inlaid or cross-banded with mahogany, and also by a bureau with sloping top—a shape which belongs entirely to the mahogany period—made altogether of oak. Such a thing as an old oak bureau with sloping top, and carved and panelled in the old oak style, would be an extreme rarity. I have seen what purported to be such an object, but cannot regard it as genuine. Its forerunner is no doubt the desk with slanting top placed upon a frame of baluster-shaped or spiral-turned legs, with cross stretchers. Such things, though uncommon, are to be found. Later, in the mahogany period, small and slender examples in the style of Heppelwhite and Sheraton were made for ladies, delicate inlay supplying the place of incised carving and turning. Walnut bureaux with slanting tops—especially those made of burr walnut showing a remarkably knotted grain, and of a lighter yellower colour than the usual walnut of a Stuart chair, are common enough. They are, of course, in shape absolutely allied to the mahogany period. Sets of chairs in the Chippendale style made of oak are also frequently to be found—very often with rush seats; and there will always occur instances of pieces of furniture made in woods unusual to the particular shape, whether old chest or cabinet, Stuart chair or chair of the mahogany period, to which they belong. I have lately seen a Charles II. arm-chair made entirely of ebony, a simple Queen Anne chair made of some equally heavy and extraneous wood, and Chippendale chairs of pear, walnut, and elm. An authentic case of a Sheraton sideboard in elm has also been communicated to me.

We may assume, then, (1) that cane does not belong to the Elizabethan-Jacobean old oak period, but does belong to the Stuarts and later; (2) that the old oak

style of incised carving and panelling is not found in the bureau shapes of the eighteenth century; (3) that mahogany has nothing to do with either the old oak or the walnut periods. Maxims such as these are truisms to those who have studied the subject, but their truth does not prevent a huge quantity of things being bought as genuine which have been made up into shapes entirely unknown to the periods ascribed to them. Many a dealer who has kept photographic records of his doings could show sideboards with cupboards and drawers made up of old oak by the dozen. No such thing as a modern-shaped sideboard was ever made at the time that the panels thus employed were carved. 'Buffets' and 'credences' are the nearest approach to it, and they are extremely rare. The same may be said of long clocks with incised oak panels, which are also very commonly now produced. They are historic impossibilities. The earliest long clocks belong to the period of Charles II. or thereabouts, and are inlaid, not carved. To the same category of impossibilities may also be referred anything in the way of a washing-stand, dressing-table with drawers, and, with very rare exceptions, a chest of drawers of incised oak. As to this last, it certainly does seem strange that this gradual evolution from the chest should so seldom be found with incised ornamentation upon it. Such things do exist, but are not greatly in evidence. The chest of drawers proper, in its earliest guise, relies upon the varied shapes of its panels, its applied mouldings, and the prettiness of its iron drop-handles for its beauties, but not often upon incised carving.

In the colour and surface of old oak furniture consists a large proportion of its beauty. Extreme darkness is not desirable, as it tends to give a funereal appearance, such as is the defect of ebony furniture unrelieved by metal mounts, coloured shell, or polished stones. It is probable that the makers of

old oak, except where, in the Gothic periods, they used painted decoration, were accustomed to rely for the tone of their handiwork mainly upon the effects of smoke and time. The permeating capacities of smoke are extraordinary, and the results of that and turpentine, beeswax, and rubbing, are something entirely different from the colour of the made-up or manufactured 'old oak' widely sold. The panelling of the Sizergh Castle room in the Victoria and Albert Museum, for instance, shows very little of that blackness which is regarded as so essential by the totally uninitiated.

When, therefore, an old piece of furniture has a surface which requires attention, it is advisable to eschew all very dark stains or thick varnishes. The latter may be necessary to protect very wide expanses of oak, as in pulpits, pews, and screens of churches, where funds will not permit of close and patient attention; but beeswax and turpentine, with vigorous friction, is the proper prescription for chests and chairs.

For table tops upon which a higher polish is desired, an excellent plan is to wrap a brick in several thicknesses of flannel, and with it rub the surface after applying a few drops of linseed oil. Very little of the oil is required, and that little should be dried off with a rag before the polishing process is commenced. In the latter, not in copious doses of oil, lies the secret of success. This is a good method for the walnut veneered furniture of the Queen Anne period. When it looks impoverished or bleached a very slight rubbing down with fine sandpaper takes off all surface roughness, and the linseed oil and rubbing will bring it to a condition more durable than that of the best French polishing. That treatment, indeed, is not calculated to withstand the damp from wine or water overset. The flannel, of course, without the brick may be used to polish small surfaces.

When a great amount of beeswax and turpentine has been rubbed in with the assiduity of perhaps generations of housewives, oak furniture takes too brown and treacly a hue, and a too brilliant polish. This is not the ideal; it is possible to be too energetic in polishing furniture, so as to produce a horny surface —a 'patina' too thick, so that what is seen is wood behind a veil of treacly brown. Potash will take it off and allow the process to be recommenced with greater caution, but some time will have elapsed before the oak has again reached a satisfactory condition, *i.e.* when it is neither impoverished nor over-daubed.

A great deal of oak, especially panelling, has been painted white in the eighteenth century. When this is cleaned off by potash and scraping, there will generally remain traces of paint in the cracks of the diagonal or 'silver grain.' They are, if not too apparent, not very objectionable, and at any rate give a certain amount of evidence of authenticity. Only the time and trouble, however, are reasons why a forger should not first paint his sham oak and then take the pigment off again. But if, as is usual, the fraud will pass muster with the incautious without such treatment, it is not likely that it will be often found to have been so handled.

Potash has a strong bleaching effect which beeswax and turpentine would take some time to reduce. Some kind of a stain, such as liquid ammonia, Vandyke brown, and powder black in water might be required. In this case it would be better to put the matter into the hands of a cabinetmaker accustomed to old furniture, as a considerable amount of further treatment would be necessary. The following recipe will show the tediousness of the process: 'Carefully dress the surface with the stain (it all depends upon the care), using a sponge, and softening with a soft brush. Let it dry; then oil with linseed oil. Then I find useful, to fix the stain

and get a "body," a coat of good brush polish. When dry, go to work with a good pad of felt and a piece of Russian or other good tallow or fat. When the polish is well worked down to a gloss, rub again with a piece of flannel till no trace of grease is left. Then it is ready for the beeswax and turpentine, as long as you like.' It will be seen, as the author of the recipe remarks, that this is not exactly a quick process, and moreover it requires considerable judgment of colour in mixing the stain, besides unlimited patience. 'Brush polish' is shellac dissolved in wood naphtha (the basis of all French polishes) and thickened with powdered resin. The brush used should be a good camel's hair 'mop' or large-sized brush, and the polish should be lightly stroked as it is drying till it begins to 'pull,' to ensure a satisfactory surface.

The state of preservation of old oak depends very largely upon the position which it has occupied. The weather-worn, sun- and rain-split timbers and barge boards of old houses differ widely in surface from oak which has decorated the interior of a church. The sharpness of the original chiselling is very little impaired in the elaborate pulpit, dated 1616, at Croscombe, near Wells. That and the upper part of the screen have not been subjected to the treatment of pew ends which may be expected to show traces of the polish induced by the generations of worshippers who have brushed past them. But even these do not compare with domestic furniture in that respect. The sharpness of the work on a pulpit, therefore, need be by no means so suspicious as the same degree found upon a chair or chest which purports to have been in the same farmhouse as long as the pulpit has been in the church. In chairs and chests and tables (not those used in chancels) we may reasonably expect to find that amenity and absence of excessive hardness or sharpness, which is the result of wear, and the filling up of hollows by the

wax, and the dirt and dust which it encloses. Innumerable dints and scars have broken the severity of the straight lines of mouldings, and have mitigated uncompromising corners. It is doubtless true that dints and bruises may be intentionally produced. The '*coup de pied intelligent*,' as a French writer has amusingly called it—from the foot of a master in the craft—could no doubt be made useful to deceive. It has its counterpart in the hand of the 'old soldier' who is said to sit for hours inducing a factitious surface upon new French furniture of the eighteenth century styles, by mere address of his horny but caressing palm. But all this is a matter of time and money, and except for a very high stake would not be worth a maker's while.

We read, too, from time to time, of the ingenuity with which worm-holes are made with hot wires or by other methods. An amusing American notion was that of shooting at new pieces of furniture at varying ranges with different-sized shot. The latest story comes from Vienna, where worms are bred in the furniture and afterwards killed off by Roentgen rays. Most of these stories may be regarded as fairy tales. Dealers are more occupied in filling worm-holes up than in making them, though, bearing in mind the story of the tiara of Saitapharnes, and of many other doubtful curiosities, we can never afford to lull our suspicions to rest.

Meantime genuine worm-holes are plentiful enough. They vary in diameter, and are not perfectly round. Sometimes the animal has apparently made two or three auger-marks which come out at the surface almost in the same place, with the result that the roundness of the original bore is replaced by quite a large irregular opening, an eighth of an inch long. The size of one worm-hole averages perhaps a small sixteenth of an inch. Signs of the worm's active presence are found in the very fine powder which he produces as the result of his borings. This may be seen either blocking

up the hole, or lying round its edge. The opening goes very little way in a directly downward direction—in fact the holes may be said usually to slant almost from the first, so that a pin thrust in perpendicularly will only penetrate about one-eighth of an inch. The worm burrows along like a mole beneath the surface, and, like the mole, shows us the results of his excavations in a modest heap. In places where he has made extensive ravages sometimes a whole length of his tube is laid bare. This is often to be seen on the very edge of a piece of wood, as, for instance, on the lower cross-piece of the back in the child's chair of walnut wood before mentioned. Here there is a very irregular furrow more than an inch and a half long, and in some places more than one-eighth broad. The worm has gone along quite close to the surface for the whole of that distance, till at last a knock or a scrape has laid bare his burrowings. There may be many other tubes close to it as yet undiscovered. The creature has a preference for light-coloured sappy wood, so that in some panels or stiles the field of operations is often definitely confined to that part where the lightness of colour shows the inferior timber. He seems to have an aversion to mahogany, though he is to be found in the strengthening pieces of other wood such as beech sometimes placed under the frame of the seat in Chippendale chairs.

The 'worm' is a beetle about one-eighth of an inch or more long. The grub or larva, which probably does most of the mischief, is a little longer. There are several kinds, but *Anobium domesticum* is the commonest. The superstitious know him by another name—that of 'Death-watch.' The ticking noise which arouses such awe is produced by the beetle striking his jaws against the hard wood. It is a signal or call from one sex to another, and is naturally heard most distinctly in the night when all is still.

To judge whether a piece of furniture is entirely old and genuine, the hand may be of assistance to the eye. The work of the 'old soldier' with the object of inducing age has been referred to. A dealer has informed me that by merely passing his hand over a piece of furniture he can tell at once whether it is wise to leave it alone. Though he may not hope to arrive at this pitch of perception, the student will always find it useful to practise the art of feeling the surface. Perfunctorily polished restorations have a harshness to the touch which the older parts have not. We can feel the fresh-cut grain sometimes when, for instance, a new arm has been added to a mahogany chair. The writer has in mind a long oak table to which an additional pair of legs was added in the centre. Wherever there is a sharp edge in the turning of these new legs the difference from the old, after more than twenty years of use, is still pronounced. The value of a piece of furniture will, of course, depend largely upon the proportion of old and new. Speaking, however, of what purports to be in the main authentic, the use of the hand is only one of the means which have their weight in the decision.

Enough has been said in the earlier chapters, upon the patterns of carving which are most typical in old oak. They are of paramount importance in the question of authenticity. Then there is the appearance of the actual incisions. If they look too sharp and unworn, no amount of worm-holes or use of old wood for fresh carving will mitigate their untruthfulness. Finally, there are the general shape, the construction, and the surface or patina to be thought of. It is a combination of all the requisites which alone can leave us in a spirit of undisturbed tranquillity. A counterfeit maker, worth his salt, must do something more than drench his timber with the commercial 'black oak' stain and bore a few holes with a fine bradawl if he wishes to impose

upon any one who has been in the habit of examining old oak furniture.

There are certain things which it is worth while to remember. We not unfrequently come across chairs or chests of old oak which are short in the leg. In the case of the chair the lower cross rails, in the chest the whole length of the rails, except where they are shaped or notched, rest on the floor. It is probable that in these cases the legs have been so rotted by damp as to have been found unsightly, and therefore were sawn off by some former possessor. There is no doubt that to very early pieces of furniture infinite harm has been done by their contact with the damp filth which must have been the natural adjunct of a floor strewn with rushes not too often renewed.

The same is the case with even later furniture. Cabriole legs rot or break, or are even sawn off because a chest of drawers or a cabinet has been found too high for some particular room. A Queen Anne chest of drawers with boldly shaped lower rail resting upon the floor, appears to be of a rare type until one observes that it is merely an object without the short cabriole legs which raised it.

It is possible to be led astray by pieces of furniture consisting almost entirely of old carved wood, which yet are by no means what they pretend to be. A very *vraisemblant* court cupboard can be manufactured out of an old oak bedstead. The metamorphosis is not apparent until one notices that the back board of the cupboard has on its edges at each end those scroll-shaped jutting brackets or side-pieces which, as we have noticed, are found on each side of the upper back of a certain type of oak chair, and also are the customary finish of bed-heads.

A not uncommon contemporary use for odd pieces of wainscot panelling would seem to have been to turn them into chests. I have seen an old and very much

worm-eaten chest which seemed to be a rarity, as it was carved not only on the front panels but all round, the top and back included. Very probably it was put together at an early date, but from its construction it seems that it was not a chest of original intention, as the stiles lacked the usual good proportion and beading of a properly designed coffer.

It would be difficult to say at what date the regular traditional making of oak furniture died out, but it would be reasonable to suppose that in the remoter parts of the country the usual shapes continued to be made quite late in the eighteenth century. To cite one instance, an antique furniture dealer of taste and experience informs me that he was completely deceived by a *soi-disant* antique 'gate table' which turned out to have been made, along with a good many others, for farm use and in good faith, by the deceased husband of the woman in whose cottage it was. The ordinary wear and tear of cottage life had brought it into proper condition.[1]

The carving up of genuine old pieces of oak furniture to increase their attractions has, of course, to be guarded against. Clever as some carvers are, it should be possible—given time and sufficient light, which in buying from a shop one seldom has—to note inordinate sharpness or inferiority of cuts, or doubtful patterns. This carving up is but too prevalent also in mahogany furniture. I have seen a set of Heppelwhite or Sheraton style chairs which have been filled in with carving and have had rosettes stuck on to their corners. The original carving was mainly the serrated or 'tulip-leaf' pattern, and its freedom and 'patina' was entirely superior to that of the added work.

Where a piece of furniture consists, as in the case

[1] Mr. F. Hockliffe of Bedford has a settle from Wales of 1725. It has raised and splayed panels, with semi-circles, the guilloche, and the 'upright flute' or scoop.

of some bureau bookcases, of two or three pieces, it is not impossible to find that a dealer has added a glass-fronted cupboard from one quarter to a bureau from another, and topped the whole with a cornice which never previously saw the other two. The discrepancy, if not observed in the style, will very probably be seen in the want of exact fit between the cupboard and the bureau part, and also in the difference of the quality of the woods employed. I am acquainted with a case in point where the lower part is an admirably made solid mahogany bureau with all its old handles on the front, and also those for lifting at the sides. The glass cupboard above is slightly too deep from back to front for the top of the bureau, and is but coarsely veneered. The cornice is ornate, and has an inlaid frieze. This is really of satin-wood veneer which has been stained down to resemble mahogany. The marked parallel bars of the shiny satin-wood grain betray it. Occasionally bureaux with bookcases over them have been made to fit close to the wainscot and the wall above it. The projection of the wainscot in that case makes it necessary that the bookcase should be deeper from front to back than the top of the bureau on which it rests. A genuine example of this has been mentioned to me, but everything was a complete fit, except as regards the projection backwards of the upper over the lower part.

Churches and cathedrals, which, in spite of the ravages of ignorant and tasteless innovators, still contain a considerable number of chests, chairs, and occasionally—as at St. Albans—other furniture, should be more useful for supplying criteria of genuine objects than they are. Unfortunately it is possible to find as doubtful pieces in churches as anywhere else. At Peterborough Cathedral there is what purports only to be an ancient chest of the fourteenth century, and at St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, is another with the date of 1595, the

name of the church and city, and elaborate carving. The panels, however, have upon them an incised arch, and very probably formed part of a pulpit of about the date of 1630. The panels of old oak furniture were very generally split, not sawn, so that one end is frequently much thicker than the other. This is very noticeable in the chest at Stoke d'Abernon church. The tool used is called a 'rīver,' and the process is still employed by splitters of laths for building purposes. Saw-marks, therefore, upon furniture purporting to be old oak are not to be expected, though, of course, the saw is not a modern invention. We may frequently find the splinters caused by its operations still adhering to some shameless black-daubed modern imposture wherever a purchaser is least likely to examine.

Splinters or fibres are also a good test of new caning in Charles II. chairs. The old caning, from time and friction, has a back which is comparatively free from fibres, and perhaps it was more free to begin with. New caning will evince to the hand passed over the back of it a number of outlying hairy fibres. It will also, if it has been carelessly stained down to match the old, betray some light and untouched corner, just as a dose of black oak-stain perfunctorily swilled over quite new wood will fail to permeate every single crevice.

CHAPTER XXV

MATERIALS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE appearance of walnut wood as used in a cane-backed chair of the Charles II. period is very different from its aspect when employed as a veneer for the flat fronts of cabinets of that king's and succeeding reigns. The smoother and more highly polished surface shows off the very decided markings of the wood as they cannot be seen on the smaller rounded and pierced shapes of a chair. Differences of application such as this help to make that very real difficulty which is experienced in determining the actual species of which a piece of furniture is constructed.

It may be remarked here that there appears to be no strict rule to be deduced from the practice of cabinet-makers in the eighteenth century as to the material of which their carcases and bases for veneering should consist. Ordinary oak is, of course, a very usual wood, easily worked, but often enough we find other kinds used. The drawers of a walnut-veneered tall-boy, for instance, may have their sides, backs, and bottoms made of oak, while the front, which is always the thickest part, may be of pine. It is perhaps just possible that in some cases this was done on principle. The front of a drawer being thicker, and having a handle, is the heaviest part. When it is pulled out, it has a natural tendency to fall downwards from the extra weight of the front end. This tendency would be considerably reduced by having a light wood instead

of a heavy oak front. Such a consideration would not, however, apply in the case of many early chests of drawers belonging to the oak period. We often notice on the outer surface of the sides of the drawers a bold groove running through the centre longitudinally. This corresponds, when the object is in its original state, to a jutting longitudinal piece on the inner surface of the side of the carcase. No doubt, when the chest of drawers thus fitted was first made, it was a very effectual method for causing the drawers to slide in and out smoothly. In the course of time, through warping and decay, these sliding arrangements have got out of order, and in the majority of cases I think it will be found that the jutting piece has been taken away, the groove filled up with a strip of new oak, and the drawer made to run again comparatively smoothly by means of guiders fastened upon the shelf in the carcase upon which each drawer rests. With the eighteenth century cabinet-makers, whose work — owing partly to the use of mahogany—was so much more exactly fitted than is the case with the furniture of the oak period, the use of the groove and jutting piece would have been an unnecessary expense. Their drawers when pulled out sag downwards very little if the particular piece of furniture is really well made. In a late Sheraton work-table in my possession there are slight guiders above the top edges of the drawer, extending only half way towards the back. It may be that these were so made for the very purpose of keeping the drawer straight when it was much pulled out; but the cabinet-maker has relied more upon a good fit than upon such slight regulators as these. It is much more likely, therefore, that the material of the carcase and everything to be veneered was dictated to eighteenth century makers by the simple consideration of what seasoned and suitable woods they happened to have in stock.

That earnest inquirer Evelyn has a long letter to

Dr. Wilkins, 'President of our Society at Gressham Coll.,' dated from Sayes Court, 17th February 1660, upon the subject of the wood which was so popular for furniture in the latter half of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries. The grain of walnut and other woods he attributes to 'the descent as well as the ascent of moysture; for what else becomes of that water which is frequently found in the cavities where many branches spread themselves at the topps of greate trees, especialy pollards, unlesse (according to its natural appetite) it sinke into the very body of the stem through the pores? For example: in the wallnut, you shall find, when 'tis old that the wood is rarely' (*i.e.* curiously) 'figured and marbled, as it were, and therefore much more esteemed by joyners, &c., than the young, which is whiter and without any grains.' Evelyn pursues his theory to some length, and whatever it may be worth he was certainly right as to the joiners' preference for a strongly marked grain. Burr walnut is frequently found employed for veneers, and later on in the eighteenth century bureaux and tea-caddies in this material are not uncommon.

When much elaborate carving was to be done, walnut was not the wood to use. Something softer and more easily cut was required. This Grinling Gibbons found in lime, which he used largely for mirror frames, and wherever his wonderfully relieved work, similar to that masterpiece over the altar in St. James's, Piccadilly, was required. Lime-tree in the flat is a light-coloured wood, not unlike satin-wood when polished, but perhaps even lighter in hue. It has not the sheen in the grain which renders the best satin-wood so attractive. Its grain, however, not being obvious, made it advantageous for carving such as that of Grinling Gibbons. In this respect and in colour it compares with box, though the two differ greatly in relative hardness. Both woods have been used for the

most elaborate carvings ever made, each of their respective kind, on account of the absence of strong markings.

Cedar was used for expensive room panelling, as we learn from Evelyn's *Diary*, August 23, 1678. The Duke of Norfolk's new palace at Weybridge had rooms 'wainscotted, and some of them parquetted with cedar, yew, cypresse, etc.' We come across the yew parquetting again at 'Cashioberie,' and at Warwick Castle, where he says the 'furniture is noble,' there exists a fine cedar panelled room. Cedar was, of course, extensively used for chests at an earlier period. Cedar in small pieces is a familiar wood, but yew, except to archers, is not so well known. It is a wood which varies in colour. Large parts of it are as light as lime, but it contains also streaks of a much darker colour, a light brown with perhaps a reddish tinge. It would be rare to find furniture of a large size made of yew, but at the Soane Museum there is a circular table of some five feet in diameter veneered with it. The uncommon Windsor chair in the Gothic style belonging to Mr. W. H. Bliss which we illustrate (Plate CLX.) is of yew, and has a fine reddish tone which makes it very remarkable. There is a certain softness and suaveness about the grain of yew, when not too many knots and 'pin-holes' appear, which differentiates it from other woods.

We may very naturally expect to find English elm a good deal used for furniture. It has not any particular beauties of colour or grain to recommend it, and its durability is by no means that of oak. Made up into chests of drawers or tables, it is of a light colour with a noticeable straight grain, but not the additional handsome and sometimes shiny cross or 'silver' grain of oak. A cabriole leg Queen Anne dressing-table in the writer's possession is made of elm, and the little knee-hole ladies' writing-tables of

the same date or thereabouts are sometimes found of this material.

Pearwood should be mentioned as one much used, but not generally familiar in appearance. English pear is a decidedly rich reddish brown, almost approaching mahogany in colour. It has not, however, so decisive a grain, but it is certainly not very easy to distinguish from mahogany, especially when found, as it occasionally is, as the material for elaborately carved chairs, etc., of the style of Chippendale. We may observe that the splendid 'Tudor Cabinet' in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Plate CLVI.) is said to be made chiefly of pear, but it has not the reddish appearance of the English wood, a fact which strengthens belief in the German origin of the upper part.

It should be obvious to any reader that to describe in words the differences between woods is practically impossible. We must confine ourselves chiefly to stating those commonly used at different dates. An inquirer will then be prepared for those which he may expect to meet with. Even with the use of samples for comparison he will find himself frequently puzzled to decide. Laburnum, for instance, is a wood used in two ways. Early in the eighteenth century it was generally cut in section so as to show the rings of the tree's growth, and thus employed makes a very effective veneer. But it was also used, later, in the ordinary way, and then appears as a comparatively quiet light brown wood resembling genuine old 'harewood' in colour, though not marked with the parallel bars which distinguish the latter material. To that we shall refer presently amongst the woods most generally used in the mahogany period.

Mahogany was originally brought from Jamaica, and in 1753 more than 500,000 feet were received from that island, but as early as 1595 it had been noticed by the carpenter on board Sir Walter Raleigh's ship for

its great beauty, hardness, and durability. The name of the cabinetmaker who first made the famous candle-box, about the year 1720, for Dr. Gibbons, said to be the prototype of all mahogany furniture, was Wollaston. In the trade the wood is generally classified under the two heads of Spanish mahogany and Honduras mahogany or baywood. The former comprises the rich, solid, and heavy varieties, susceptible of a high degree of polish, and frequently showing rich wavy figuring, in which case the wood is enormously enhanced in value, and used only in the form of veneers. The finest curl and figuring of the grain of woods is found in nearly all cases at that part of the tree where the division of the limbs from the trunk commences. The best curl is found at the branching of two arms only away from the trunk, this being less confused than that caused by the divergence of several arms. A saw-cut made vertically across the tops of the two branching limbs down into the main trunk would exhibit that parting of the ways of the grain which is so valuable for the making of veneers.

Sometimes, after having been floated in tropical seas, the wood is found badly wormed or bored. As a rule, however, this wood does not seem to be so subject to worm as oak or the lighter woods, such as beech and pine. The difference of weight between fine Spanish mahogany and the commoner kind is remarkable. I have compared chairs in the style of Chippendale of almost identical size and pattern in which the finer quality of wood can easily be detected by the greater weight. The amount of wood required for an elaborately carved Chippendale chair or mirror is considerable. The waved front of a chair frame might easily require timber five inches thick, and this liberality is a characteristic which distinguishes the genuine from its economical imitation.

The favourite wood with the eighteenth century

cabinetmakers for inlaying mahogany — mostly by cross-banding or borders for table tops, drawer fronts, and carcases of chests of drawers—is satin wood. This is the product of a large tree native of India and Ceylon, though a similar wood is obtainable from another tree in the West Indies. It is said that the sheeny grain which renders satin wood so attractive is found larger in old, *i.e.* eighteenth century pieces of furniture, than it is nowadays. Very considerable differences of grain are to be found in satin wood, some of it being less sheeny and some less regularly marked than other specimens. Sometimes it is found used in such thin stringing lines that there is no room for its sheen to show. Only by its rather more marked small granulations is it then distinguishable from box-wood.

Tulip wood is occasionally found as a cross-banding upon mahogany, but as it is decidedly reddish in its tone it approaches mahogany too much to make a good contrasting veneer. It is more naturally used with satin wood, from which it has a marked difference. Tulip is a wood only to be had in small pieces as a rule, and is consequently nearly always found as a veneer, but I have seen an exceptionally fine and tall Sheraton glass-fronted cabinet for china which had solid tulip mouldings. This was a unique specimen. As used in cross-bandings, tulip may be recognised by the dark reddish lines on a yellowish ground which stretch in irregular widths—some nearly half an inch, many but $\frac{1}{32}$ of an inch wide, across the piece. The wood which chiefly resembles it, and was much used by the French eighteenth century cabinetmakers, is kingwood. Mr. Litchfield, in fact, notices in the appendix to his *History of Furniture* that in France the names are interchanged, and the much richer red and darker kind which we call kingwood, and which finds its nearest affinity perhaps in rosewood, is deno-

minated tulip. Rosewood is a much darker species than either. It is familiar as used in pianofortes, and, I think, was more popular at the beginning of the nineteenth century and onwards than in the days of Heppelwhite or Sheraton.

Lancewood is said to be a good deal used now as a substitute for satin wood. It is of a similar colour, but has not the bars and sheen in its grain. It is said that old shafts of vehicles are much sought after as affording a supply of lancewood for cutting up.

When satin wood is used in Sheraton style furniture as the chief material for veneer, the arrangement in tables is very often the following:—The border of the table top is banded with tulip, and so also is its edge or side. On the inside of the top border comes a thin stringing of box, followed by another of the same breadth, perhaps $\frac{1}{16}$th of an inch, of ebony. Why box should have been so much used as a stringing on satin-wood tables it is rather difficult to understand, as its colour when the table is polished is nearly the same, the only difference, not very noticeable, being that of the lesser granulations of box. The use of ebony is easily to be explained by the excellent effect its dark hue produces between the tulip and the satin wood. Sometimes two lines of ebony enclosing one of box can be found, or two of ebony with three of box, the widths being varied. In fact, the changes are rung in the proportions as much as they are in the ruled and gilt or painted lines of the mounts of those old collectors who took a pride in the proper display of their drawings or engravings. But box, ebony, and tulip woods are the usual combination upon satin-wood tables. In special cases lines of ivory are found employed with very dainty effect.

A very considerable use was made for secrétaires with falling fronts, tea-caddies, and small desks either for placing on a table or upon their own tapering

legs, of a material called 'harewood.' This is said to be sycamore dyed to a brown which verges on the side of green. Harewood has parallel lines in it which make it resemble a dark species of satin wood, but the lines are twice as close together, and there is not the sheen of satin wood. It is said that modern harewood approaches the very slightly greenish brown tinge which I have mentioned, whilst the genuine old stained wood is an undoubted brown. This may or may not be the case, but I have certainly noticed these differences of colour between old and new panels of this wood. As I observed before, laburnum used in the ordinary way is not unlike harewood, but it has not the unmistakable bars across it which render hare comparable in figuring at least to satin wood, though their hues are vastly different.

On the more delicately inlaid eighteenth century furniture there may be found a very favourite edging for the angles, which consists of minute alternate rhomboidal or triangular shapes of dark and light wood. This is another small instance of the continuity of decorative motives which is to be found in English furniture, and which precludes our supposing that it was evolved by a succession of new styles, each owing nothing to the last. Upon chairs and chests of the old oak period the same system of inlaying may be found, but rougher and larger than the eighteenth century scale. The shapes, however, are the same, and in occasional miniature work of the seventeenth century sufficiently minute, though not comparable in finish to the eighteenth century technique. Upon a tiny set of drawers in the writer's possession, a part of some larger object, dark and light triangles are separated by a zigzag of silver threading its way between. A spinet made at Norwich in 1703, which I have seen, shows that already, so early in the eighteenth century, the cabinet-makers could do justice to fine wood with delicate

inlay. It has a bordering of dark and light quite comparable to the dainty edgings of later knife-boxes and tea-caddies.

It is curious to note that the variety of stock ornaments which formed the repertoire of the eighteenth century inlayer was not larger than that of his predecessor the carver. Of stock inlays the shell, more or less naturalistically shaded, is the commonest. It is different in shape to the carved scallop-shell characteristic of William III. furniture, and to be found on the legs of early Chippendale style chairs. The inlaid shell is a pointed one, more like a Triton's conch, or the more modest whelk, and is produced in many degrees of merit. Sometimes the edges of its open part are serrated or 'laced' with considerable elaboration. A good one may be inlaid in at least sixteen pieces, a poor one in five. In that case the evidence of the modelling obtained by plunging the wood in hot sand for various lengths of time will be very manifest. Ideal inlay is that in which the tones are obtained each by a differently tinted piece of wood, as was the case in the work of that master of inlaid French furniture, David Roentgen.

As common as the shell is the later oval filled with fan shapes which is to be found upon hundreds of pieces of furniture in the style of Shearer, Heppelwhite, and Sheraton. This shape is of universal use in the decoration of the time. It figures over and over again upon the plaster ceilings of rooms in the Adam style. In J. Wyatt's designs for ceilings, etc., 1770-1785, there is a ceiling with its corners filled up with fans exactly copied from the lady's usual shutter hand-fan. The fan with him is a characteristic ornament. It is a more cheerful shape than the urn which stands so often as a finial upon cabinets and bookcases in the style of Heppelwhite, and as to the introduction of which there is an amusing reflection made by a Frenchman

who visited London in 1765, and published his impressions in 1790. It is quoted by Mr. George Paston in his interesting book, *Side-lights on the Georgian Period*. The French writer was engaged in the wine-trade, a fact which colours his views. Since the disuse of foreign wines by the English, 'insipid raillery,' he says, 'pitiful conundrums, dull metaphysics, and plaintive elegies have supplied the place of light conversation, amiable simplicity, sprightly wit, and joyous parodies; in fine, funeral urns, coffins, and cypress boughs are become fashionable even in buildings of the most elegant taste.' There certainly seems to have been a tendency towards an odd displacement of ornaments in the minds of the designers of this period. Whereas the urns are found on furniture and houses, upon the tombstones in any country churchyard we may find the most frivolous motives of Louis XV. An urn with flowers growing out of it is a third fashion of stock inlay, found upon English-looking furniture, but it may perhaps be a Dutch pattern.

All these common shapes of inlay, however rough, are vastly to be preferred to the unfortunate practice of disfiguring smaller woodwork, such as tea-caddies, work-boxes, and writing-desks, with coloured topographical plates or pictures. It is a thousand pities that this fashion, which was perhaps a cheap and distant reminiscence of the Sèvres china picture plaque placed upon furniture, was ever introduced.

More endurable than the picture, though not very inspiring, because found upon furniture in the late Sheraton style of inferior design and heavy shape, was the method of replacing wood inlay by brass lines and scroll ornament. It is a cheap form of Boulle work, wood taking the place of tortoise-shell, but whereas fine Boulle work is engraved, and thereby avoids the harshness of mere flat inlaid brass lines, the English work of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century

is seldom, if ever, so treated. The uncompromising edges of the brass lines are never blended into the ground by incised shading, and the dissimilarity of the two materials produces an inferior effect to that of wood inlaid upon wood when the mellow tone of polish blends all into a harmonious whole. Caution has to be observed in the judgment of furniture with inlaid patterns. We have seen how mahogany furniture of the eighteenth century is liable to the process of 'carving up' by unscrupulous dealers. The corresponding process may also be performed with veneered or inlaid furniture. There are, of course, notable examples of veneered furniture elaborately decorated with inlaid patterns, such as those illustrated in Plates CXLVIII. and CXLIX. of this work. But these examples were extremely costly, and must therefore have been rare. The fan and the shell, as we have seen, together with modest borderings of tulip and other woods, are the rule in the decoration of the late eighteenth century. The more florid and exceptional the piece, the greater the necessity for thorough examination. There is this in favour of the imitator of eighteenth century furniture: he has only to reproduce the effects of the wear of a hundred years, more or less. His task, though not absolutely easy, is perhaps hardly as difficult as that of the man who wishes to produce a really deceptive Gothic chest.

A word should be said about handles. Brass is the material used for the mahogany period, and iron for that of oak. A ring hanging from a circular plate is found in Gothic times, as in the York armoire (Plate II.). Drop handles, narrower at the top than the bottom, somewhat pear-shaped, are characteristic of the next period. The court cupboard of 1603 (Plate XXXVIII.) shows these. Representative seventeenth century hinges may be found in Plates XXXVIII., XL., XLI., and XLII. Wooden knob handles and tubular wooden

handles are also found (Plates LXI., LXII.). With the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth a solid pear-shaped drop handle takes the place of the open pear-shaped, and is often of brass (see Plates XLVI., LXXVII., LXXX., LXXXI. 1). After this we find the open drop handle with a plate of irregular shaped outline, roughly incised, but not pierced or fretted (Plates LXXIX., LXXX.). Towards the Chippendale period pierced plates and also chased handles come into fashion, and are often quite elaborate (Plates XC., CVIII., CIX.). Heppelwhite and Sheraton return to a solid polygonal, round or oval plate with a drop handle, and also largely use brass knobs or lions' heads with rings in their mouths (Plates CIX., CXXV., CXXXIX., CLIII., CLIV.). As I have noticed elsewhere, Battersea enamel was sometimes used for the knobs. Old handles are a desideratum; a brass Sheraton drop handle upon a seventeenth century chest of drawers is a mere disfigurement.

APPENDIX

NOTE I. p. 9.

The Bedroom of a Rich Man in the Fifteenth Century

Sir John Fastolf's contained in 1459—

In primis j. fedderbedde. Item j. donge of fyne blewe.
Item j. bolster. Item ij. blankettys of fustians.
Item j. payre of schetis [sheets]. Item j. purpeynt.
Item j. hangyd bedde of arras. Item j. testour. Item j. selour.
Item j. coveryng.
Item iij. curtaynes of grene worsted.
Item j. bankeur [covering for a bench] of tapestre warke.
Item iiij. peces hangyng of grene worsted.
Item j. banker hangyng tapestre worke. Item j. cobbord clothe [presumably for a dresser or *cupboard*].
Item ij. staundyng aundyris [andirons]. Item j. feddefflok.
Item j. chafern [chafer or portable stove] of laten. Item j. payre of tongys.
Item j. payre of bellewes. Item j. litell paylet [pallet bed?]. Item ij. blankettys.
Item j. payre of schetys. Item j. coverlet.
Item vj. white cosschynes. Item ij. lytell bellys.

Item j. foldyng table. Item j. long chayre. Item j. grene chayre.
Item j. hangyng candylstyk of laton.

The list is headed 'My Maister is Chambre and the withe draughte withe the Stable.'

Paston Letters, vol. i. p. 485,
Gairdner's Edition, 1872.

Note ii. p. 14

In the Hall of Penshurst are two tables 27 feet long by 3 feet wide, of massive oak. Each has but three legs, but these are very solid. The bases are cross-shaped, with mouldings on the ends of the four projecting arms or feet. A square central pillar is reinforced by brackets shaped to suit the mouldings below, and bears up a corbel-like capital upon which the table top is laid. They date from the early fifteenth century.

Note iii. p. 62

The Duchess (of Marlborough) had also to relinquish for the use of her successors her apartments at St. James's Palace. She could only console herself by giving orders to tear down and carry away the brass locks from the doors, and the marble chimneypieces from the walls. It is gratifying to find that Marlborough disapproved the spoliation, and wrote from the Continent to forbid its progress. As it was, it had wellnigh exhausted the patience of the Queen, who threatened to stop the monthly payments for the works at Blenheim. 'I will build no house for the Duke of Marlborough,' she said, 'when the Duchess has pulled mine to pieces.'

Stanhope, *Reign of Queen Anne.*

NOTE IV. p. 161

Letter of Grinling Gibbons to Mary, Lady Newdegate, at Harefield, about a monument to her husband:—

'I holp all things will pleas You wen you see it for I indevered it as much as in me lais, but If you should mislick enny thing, You may be shoer to comand y^r^ ombell and obegent sarvant, GRINLING GIBBONS.'

Cavalier and Puritan, Lady Newdigate-Newdegate, p. 291.

NOTE V. p. 164

The Duchess of Portsmouth's Glass-Lined Chamber

Besides Nell Gwynne, the Duchess of Portsmouth —Louise de Querouaille—had a glass-lined room in which the Moorish ambassador, when on his visit to England, supped with her, 'the king being there' . . . and 'the Amb^r^ much wondered at the room of glas where he saw himself in a hundred places.'

Letter of Sir R. Newdegate, *Cavalier and Puritan*, Lady Newdegate, p. 169.

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CORRIGENDA

On Plate V., *for* fourteenth, *read* fifteenth century.

On Plate X. at the top, *for* Guillochis, *read* Guilloche.

On Plate XL., *for* C. Newton-Robinson, Esq., *read* Mrs. C. Newton-Robinson.

On Plate LXXXVII. fig 1, *for* walnut veneer or walnut, *read* walnut veneer and walnut.

On Plate CXXXII. fig. 2, *for* shield-back armchair, *read* shield-back chair.

On Plate CLI., *for* mahogany, inlaid, *read* mahogany, painted.

On Plate CLVI., *for* late fifteenth, *read* late sixteenth or early seventeenth.

On Plate CLIX., *for* late eighteenth century, *read* eighteenth century.

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PLATE I.

CHAIR IN BERE REGIS CHURCH, DORSET PARTLY 15TH CENTURY

PLATE II.

ARMOIRE, OAK, 15TH CENTURY YORK MINSTER

PLATE III.

OAK CHEST, 12TH OR 13TH CENTURY; DECORATED WITH IRON BRAMPTON CHURCH, NORTHANTS

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

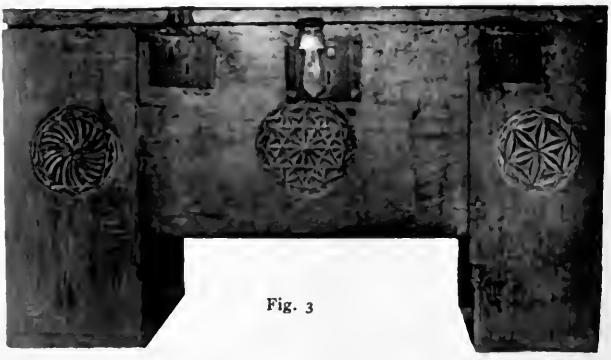


Fig. 3

PLATE IV.

FIG. 1.—END VIEW OF OAKEN CHEST STOKE D'ABERNON

,, 2.—END VIEW OF CHEST STOKE D'ABERNON CLOSED

,, 3—OAK CHEST 13TH CENTURY STOKE D'ABERNON CHURCH

PLATE V.

CHEST, OAK 14TH CENTURY DERSINGHAM CHURCH, NORFOLK

PLATE VI.

CHEST, YORK MINSTER

PLATE VII.

OAK PANEL, FRONT OF A CHEST, CARVED WITH A REPRESENTATION OF THE STORY OF ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON

SPECIMENS OF THE S CURVE

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

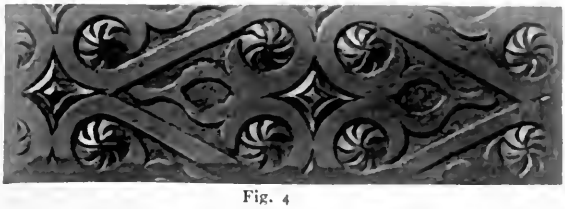


Fig. 4

Fig. 6

Fig. 5

Fig. 7

PLATE VIII.

FIG. 1.—FROM THE UPPER RAIL OF A CHEST

„ 2.—TYPICAL PANEL—S CURVES OPPOSED IN PAIRS

„ 3.—TYPICAL TREATMENT—A SMALL PANEL FROM A CHAIR BACK, AND A PILASTER

„ 4.—COARSE VERSION OF S CURVE

„ 5.—S CURVE ON THE TOP OF A CHAIR BACK

„ 6.—S CURVE ON THE SIDE OF A CHAIR BACK—AS A BRACKET

„ 7.—S CURVES AS THEY APPEAR IN CHARLES II. CHAIRS

SPECIMENS OF SEMICIRCLE AND ARCH.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

PLATE IX.

1 TO 4—VARIANTS OF THE "SEMICIRCLE PATTERN"

5—THE "PLANTED ARCH" WITH A VERSION OF THE "UPRIGHT LEAF" ON THE PILLARS, AND THE S CURVE ON THE STILES AT EACH SIDE

6—PLANTED ARCH, WITH S CURVE ON THE PILLARS

7—THE ARCH INCISED

SPECIMENS—THE GUILLOCHIS AND TYPICAL MOULDINGS.

1

2

3

C

5

6

PLATE X.

1—GUILLOCHE, WITH A "FAGGOT" SHAPE BETWEEN THE CIRCLES

2—VARIETY OF THE GUILLOCHE

3—"GUILLOCHED QUINCUNX" AS A PANEL ORNAMENT

4—A—DENTAL COURSE, OGEE MOULDED
B—"TURNED HALF-PENDANT," APPLIED
C—PANEL WITH PLAIN GUILLOCHE—NO SMALL INTERVENING CIRCLE

5—TYPICAL MOULDING ON EDGE OF A STILE; AND FLAT PANEL. STILE IN FRONT OF PANEL, EARLY PART OF THE 17TH CENTURY

6—TYPICAL BOLECTION MOULDING, I.E. MOULDING PROJECTING IN FRONT OF STILE. PANEL "RAISED AND SPLAYED," AND IN FRONT OF STILE. WREN'S MOULDINGS, HAMPTON COURT, END OF 17TH AND EARLY 18TH CENTURY

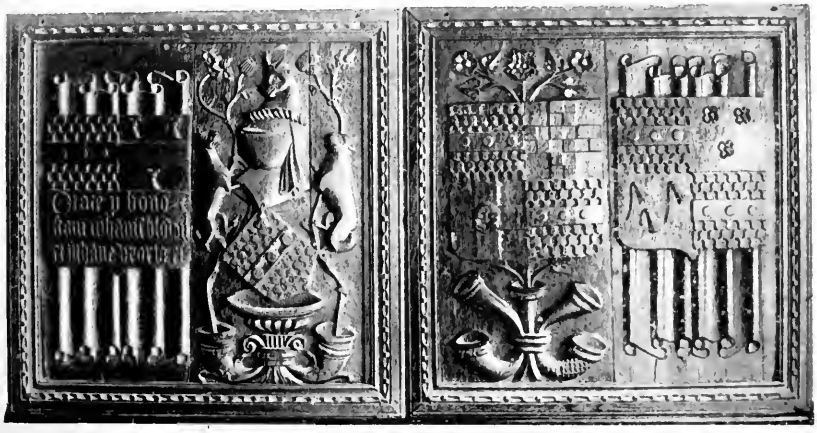
PLATE XI.

INTERIOR OF CROSCOMBE CHURCH, SOMERSETSHIRE

PLATE XII.

OAK PANEL LATE 16TH CENTURY GUILLOCHE BORDERING AND CARTOUCHE LION'S FACE MISSING

1



2

PLATE XIII.

1—OAK PANELLING, WITH LINEN-FOLD PATTERN 15TH CENTURY

2—TUDOR PANELS, WITH ARMS OF THE BLOUNT FAMILY, SHOWING LINEN-FOLD PATTERNS

PLATE XIV.

PANELLING FROM A HOUSE AT WALTHAM ABBEY EARLY 16TH CENTURY

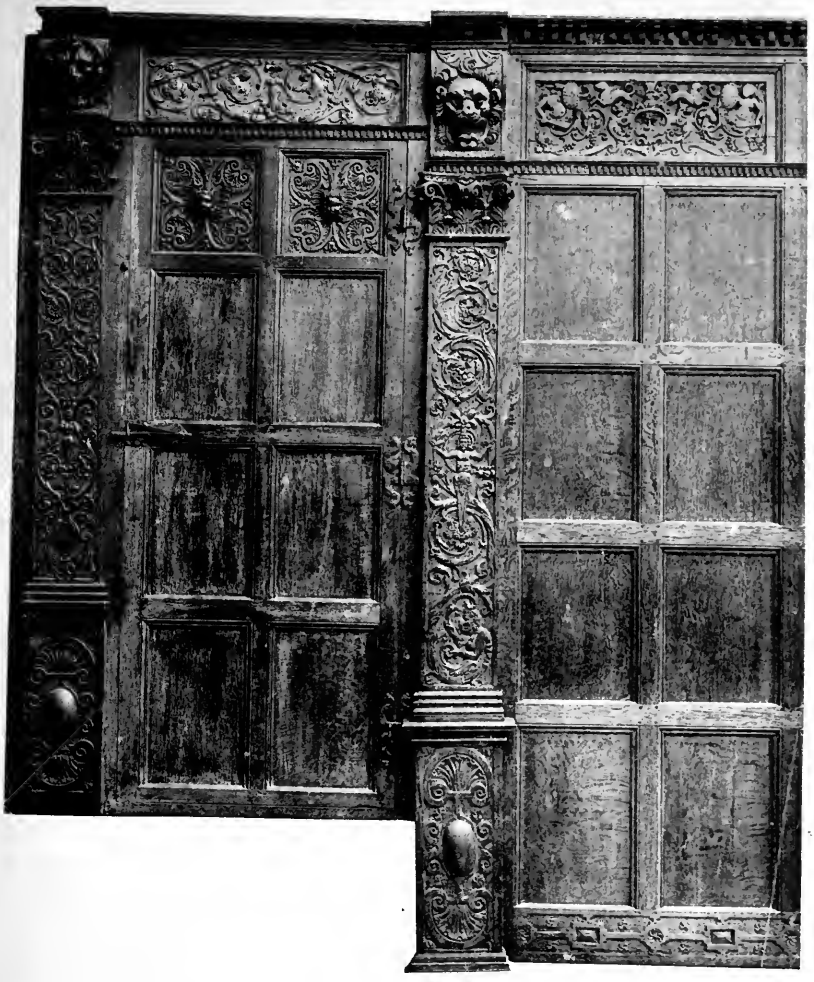


PLATE XV

OAK PANELLING FROM EXETER 1600 CIRCA.

PLATE XVI.

PANELS FROM SIZERGH CASTLE 16TH CENTURY

PLATE XVII.

END OF A BEDSTEAD OF OAK, DECORATED WITH "LINEN" PATTERN FIRST HALF OF 16TH CENTURY

PLATE XVIII.

BEDSTEAD, OAK DATED 1593

PLATE XIX.

BEDSTEAD, OAK DATED 1593

PLATE XX.

1—OAK BEDSTEAD 17TH CENTURY

2—HEAD OF BEDSTEAD

PLATE XXI.

BEDSTEAD, OAK ABOUT 1640

1

2

3

PLATE XXII.

1—CRADLE, OAK EARLY 17TH CENTURY

2—CRADLE OF OAK 1641

PLATE XXIII.

CHEST OF PRIOR THOMAS SILKSTED

PLATE XXIV.

OAK CHEST 16TH CENTURY

PLATE XXV.

COFFER FIRST HALF OF 16TH CENTURY

PLATE XXVI.

OAK CHEST LATE 16TH CENTURY OR EARLY 17TH

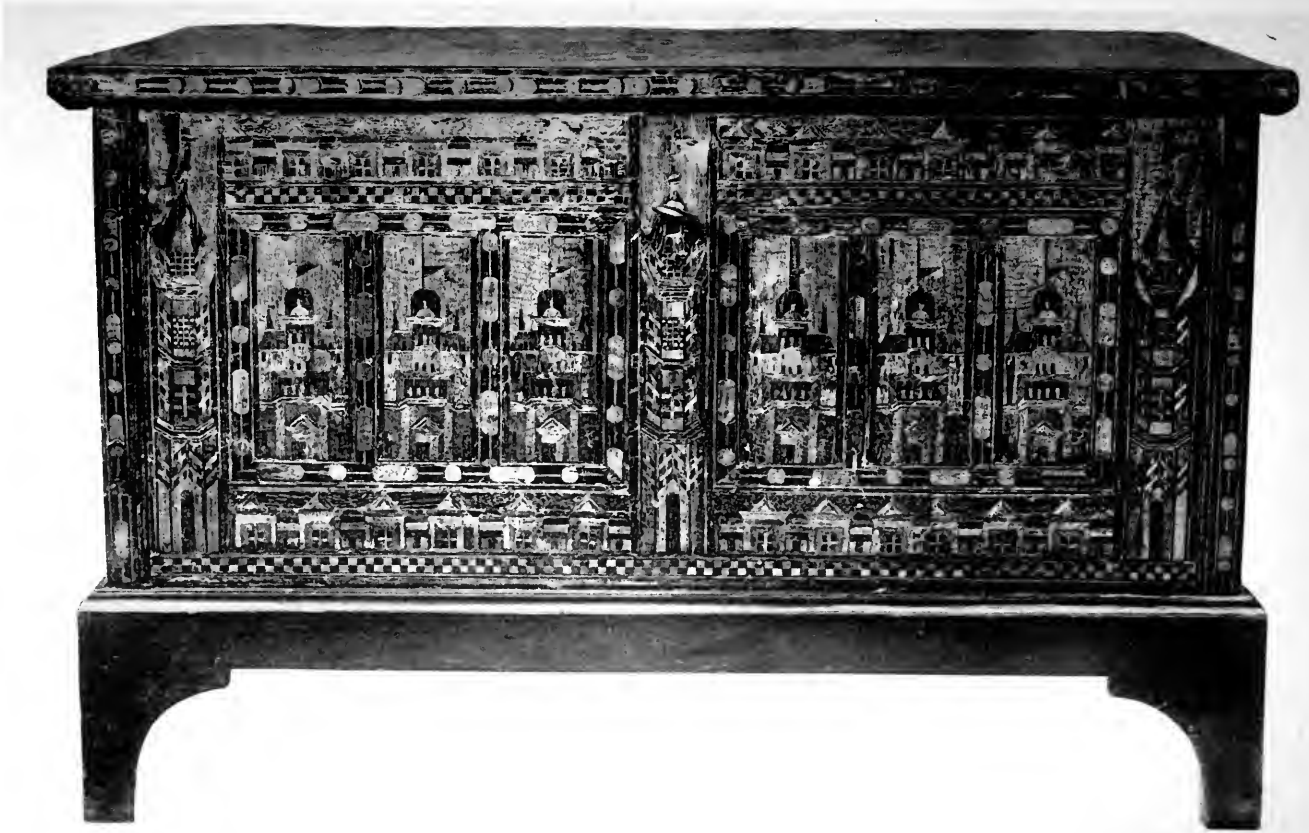


PLATE XXVII.

INLAID "NONE-SUCH" CHEST 16TH CENTURY

1

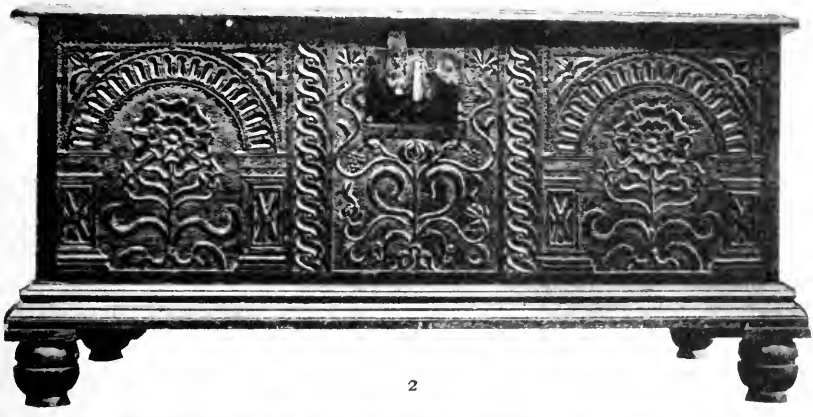
2

PLATE XXVIII.

1—INLAID OAK CHEST EARLY 17TH CENTURY

2—OAK CHEST, INLAID WITH GEOMETRICAL MARQUETRY ABOUT 1600

1



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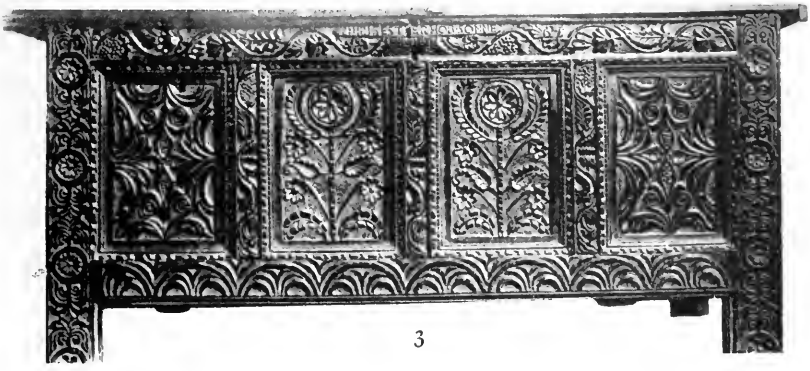


3

PLATE XXIX.

1—OAK COFFER, IN THE LOWER PART OF THE FRONT ARE TWO DOORS EARLY 17TH CENTURY

2—OAK COFFER FIRST HALF OF 17TH CENTURY

3—OAK COFFER; "THIS IS ESTHER HOBSONNE CHIST, 1637"

1

2

PLATE XXX.

1—END OF OAK CHEST WITH ORNAMENTAL PANEL

2—OAK CHEST WITH S CURVED RAIL AND DECORATED ENDS 17TH CENTURY

1

2

PLATE XXXI.

1—OAK CHEST 17TH CENTURY

2—OAK CHEST 17TH CENTURY

1

2

PLATE XXXII.

1—OAK CHEST, WITH GEOMETRICAL CARVING 17TH CENTURY

2—LATE LINEN-FOLD PANELLED CHEST 17TH CENTURY

PLATE XXXIII.

COFFER, CYPRESS WOOD LATE 16TH OR EARLY 17TH CENTURY

1

2

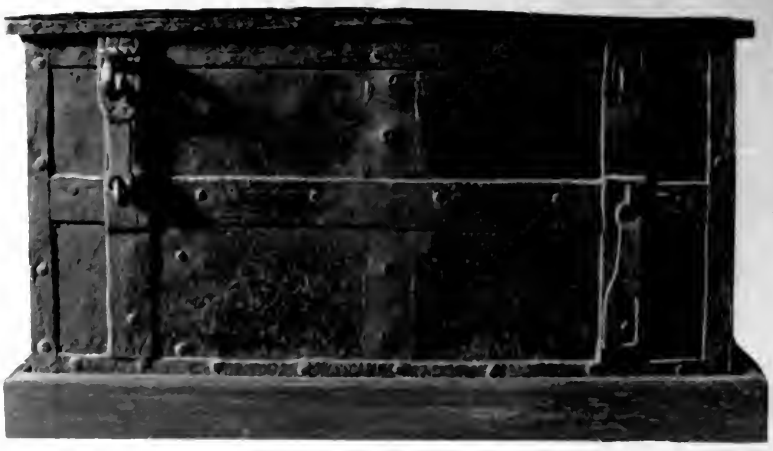
PLATE XXXIV.

1—CHEST, OAK EARLY 17TH CENTURY

2—CHEST, ELM ABOUT 1620

PLATE XXXV.

COFFER, OAK, INLAID EARLY 17TH CENTURY



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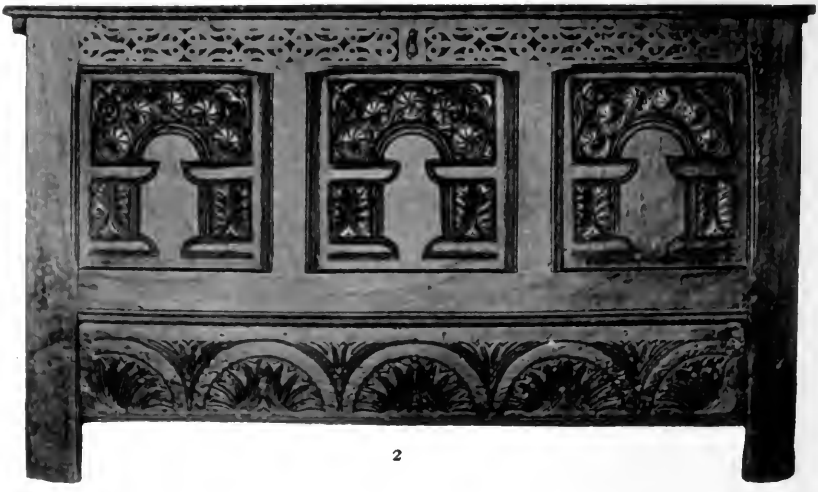


2

PLATE XXXVI.

1—IRON CHEST, PAINTED 15TH CENTURY

2—OAK CHEST WITH INCISED ARCH 17TH CENTURY

PLATE XXXVII.

PANELLING EARLY 16TH CENTURY

PLATE XXXVIII.

COURT CUPBOARD, OAK INLAID, 1603

PLATE XXXIX.

OAK CABINET, INLAID LATE 16TH CENTURY

PLATE XL.

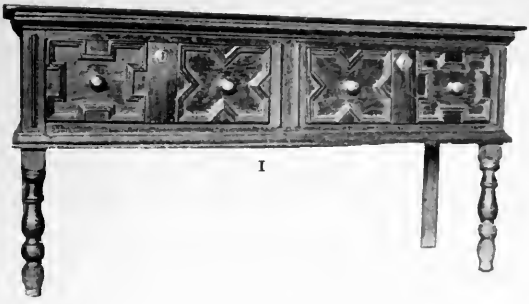
YORKSHIRE CABINET, OAK ABOUT 1630

PLATE XLI.

YORKSHIRE OAK CABINET

PLATE XLII.

OAK CABINET 17TH CENTURY



1

2

3

PLATE XLIII.

1—DRESSER, OAK 17TH CENTURY

2—WELSH COURT CUPBOARD, OAK LATE 17TH CENTURY

3—WELSH DRESSER, OAK, INLAID WITH MAHOGANY 18TH CENTURY

PLATE XLIV.

LIVERY CUPBOARD, OAK EARLY 17TH CENTURY

PLATE XLV.

1—OAK CABINET 17TH CENTURY

2—CABINET, OAK, WITH BOSSES OF BLACK WOOD 17TH CENTURY

PLATE XLVI.

COIN CABINET, OAK AND CEDAR INLAID WITH ROSEWOOD

17TH CENTURY

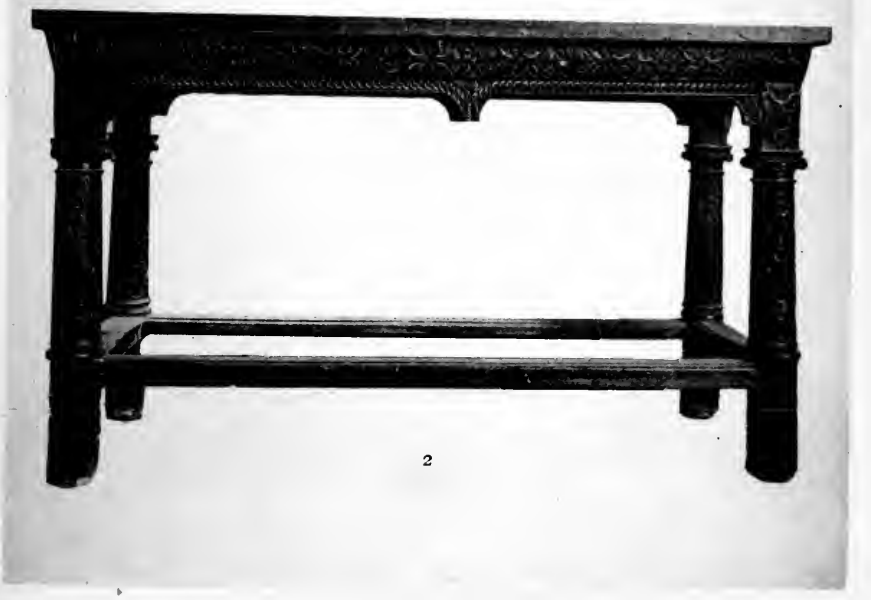
PLATE XLVII.

CABINET, OAK, INLAID WITH MOTHER OF PEARL, ETC. 17TH CENTURY

PLATE XLVIII.

OAK CABINET

1



2

PLATE XLIX.

1—TABLE, OAK DATED 1616

2—TABLE, OAK FIRST HALF OF 17TH CENTURY

1

2

PLATE L.

1—TABLE, OAK ABOUT 1620

2—GATE TABLE, OAK 17TH CENTURY

PLATE LI.

DRAWING TABLE, OAK INLAID LATE 16TH CENTURY

PLATE LII.

1—TABLE, OAK 17TH CENTURY

2—TABLE, OAK DATED 1622

1

2

PLATE LIII.

1—CHAIR-TABLE, OAK 17TH CENTURY

2—TABLE, INLAID ABOUT 1700

1 2 3

PLATE LIV.

1—ARM-CHAIR, OAK LATE 16TH OR EARLY 17TH CENTURY

2—ARM-CHAIR, OAK 1631

1

2

3

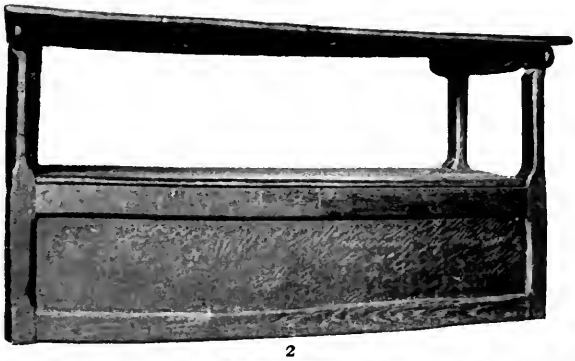
PLATE LV.

1—ARM-CHAIR, OAK 17TH CENTURY
2—ARM-CHAIR, OAK "I.P. 1670"
3—ARM-CHAIR, OAK 17TH CENTURY

PLATE LVI.

1—CHILD'S ARM-CHAIR, OAK EARLY 17TH CENTURY
2—CHILD'S ARM-CHAIR, OAK EARLY 17TH CENTURY
3—CHILD'S ARM-CHAIR, OAK 17TH CENTURY

1



2

3

PLATE LVII.

1—OAK SETTLE 17TH CENTURY

2 AND 3—OAK SETTLE AND TABLE COMBINED 17TH CENTURY

PLATE LVIII.

1—CHAIR, OAK 17TH CENTURY

2— ,, ,, ,,

3— ,, ,, ,,

4— ,, ,, ,,

1

2

3

4

PLATE LIX.

1—CHAIR, OAK 17TH CENTURY

2— ,, ,, ,,

3— ,, ,, ,,

4— ,, ,, ,,

PLATE LX.

1—CHAIR, OAK EARLY 17TH CENTURY

2— „ „ 17TH CENTURY

3—ARM-CHAIR, OAK LATE 17TH CENTURY

PLATE LXI.

OAK CHEST, WITH DRAWERS EARLY 17TH CENTURY

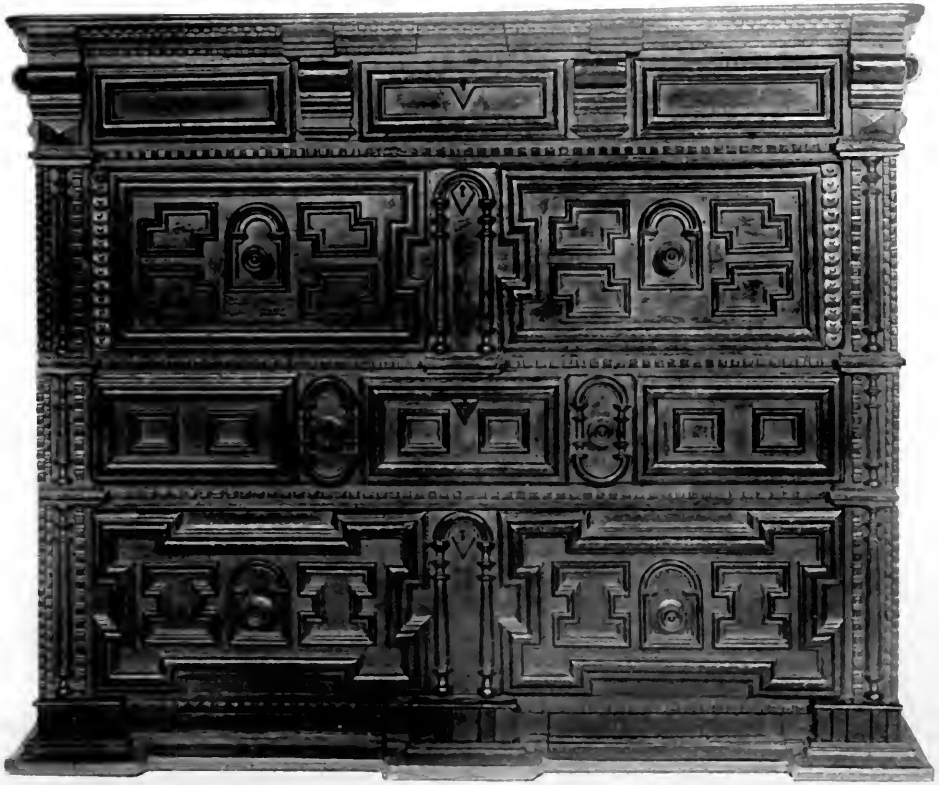


PLATE LXII.

CHEST OF DRAWERS, OAK

PLATE LXIII.

CHEST OF DRAWERS, OAK LATE 17TH CENTURY

PLATE LXIV.

OAK CHEST, 17TH CENTURY, ON STAND OF LATE 17TH CENTURY

PLATE LXV.

LEATHER-COVERED CHEST LATE 17TH CENTURY

PLATE LXVI.

1—CHAIR, OAK 1640 CIRCA

2—CHAIR, WALNUT LATE 17TH CENTURY

1 2 3 4

PLATE LXVII.

1—CHAIR 1650 CIRCA

2—CHAIR, WALNUT 1660 CIRCA

3— ,, ,, ,,

4—AIR-PUMP OF ROBERT BOYLE 1650 CIRCA

1

2

3

4

PLATE LXVIII.

1—CHAIR, OAK 1660 CIRCA

2— „ „ „

3—ARM-CHAIR, OAK 1690 CIRCA

4— „ „ „

1

2

3

PLATE LXIX.

1—ARM-CHAIR, OAK END OF 17TH CENTURY
2—CHAIR, WALNUT LATE 17TH CENTURY
3— ,, , 1700 CIRCA

1

2

PLATE LXX.

1—CHILD'S ARM-CHAIR, OAK 1660 CIRCA

1

2

PLATE LXXI.

1 —COUCH, OAK 1660 CIRCA

2—SETTEE, ,, ,, ,,

PLATE LXXII.

MIRROR FRAME, LIMEWOOD, GRINLING GIBBONS 1648-1721

PLATE LXXIII.

GILT MIRROR FRAMES LATE 17TH CENTURY

PLATE LXXIV.

TABLE GRINLING GIBBONS

PLATE LXXV.

MIRROR FRAMES, GILT EARLY 18TH CENTURY

PLATE LXXVI.

TALL CLOCKS, VENEERED AND INLAID FROM 1680-1715

PLATE LXXVII.

CABINETS, INLAID LATE 17TH CENTURY

PLATE LXXVIII.

CABINET, VENEERED LATE 17TH CENTURY

1

2

PLATE LXXIX.

1—DWARF CHEST OF DRAWERS, VENEERED

2—KNEE-HOLE WRITING TABLE, VENEERED

BOTH LATE 17TH OR EARLY 18TH CENTURY

PLATE LXXX.

1—CHEST OF DRAWERS ON STAND, WALNUT VENEER

2—CABINET ON STAND, OAK, CIRCA 1690-1710

PLATE LXXXI.

DRESSING TABLE, VENEERED EARLY 18TH CENTURY

1

2

3

4

5

6

PLATE LXXXII.

MIRRORS—1, 3, 4, 5, 6, MAHOGANY, GILT
2, GILT EARLY 18TH CENTURY

PLATE LXXXIII.

1—ARM-CHAIR, LATE 17TH OR EARLY 18TH CENTURY

2—CHAIR, HEAVY WOOD, SPECIES UNCERTAIN LATE 17TH OR EARLY 18TH CENTURY

3—CHAIR, WALNUT INLAID LATE 17TH OR EARLY 18TH CENTURY

PLATE LXXXIV.

TWO VIEWS OF A CHAIR, EXOTIC WOOD EARLY 18TH CENTURY

2 1 3

PLATE LXXXV.

1—ARM-CHAIR, WALNUT WOOD
2—CHAIR, ,, ,,
3— ,, ,, ,, 1720-1730 CIRCA

PLATE LXXXVI.

1—CHAIR, MAPLE
2— ,, WALNUT
3— ,, ,,
4— ,, ,,
EARLY GEORGIAN

1

2

3

PLATE LXXXVII.

1—SETTEE, WALNUT VENEER OR WALNUT EARLY 18TH CENTURY

2— ,, ,, IST HALF 18TH CENTURY

3— ,, ,, ,, ,,

PLATE LXXXVIII.

CABINET, MAHOGANY 1730 CIRCA

PLATE LXXXIX.

CORNER CUPBOARD, MAHOGANY, PRE-CHIPPENDALE

EARLY 18TH CENTURY

PLATE XC.

BOOKCASE, MAHOGANY, CHIPPENDALE

PLATE XCI.

PRESS BEDSTEAD, STYLE OF CHIPPENDALE

1

2

PLATE XCII

1—ARM-CHAIR, MAHOGANY, CHIPPENDALE ABOUT 1745

2—ARM-CHAIR, ONE OF A PAIR, MAHOGANY FIRST HALF OF 18TH CENTURY

1

2

PLATE XCIII.

1 AND 2—MAHOGANY CHIPPENDALE CHAIRS

PLATE XCIV.

1—RIBAND BACK CHAIR, WALNUT, CHIPPENDALE (?)

PLATE XCV.

RIBAND-BACK ARM-CHAIR, MAHOGANY, CHIPPENDALE

PLATE XCVI.

1—ONE OF A PAIR OF CHAIRS, MAHOGANY, CHIPPENDALE

2—CHIPPENDALE ARM CHAIR, MAHOGANY

1

2

PLATE XCVII

1—CHAIR, MAHOGANY CHIPPENDALE

2—ARM-CHAIR CHIPPENDALE

PLATE XCVIII.

1—UPHOLSTERED MAHOGANY EASY CHAIR CHIPPENDALE

2—OVAL-BACK MAHOGANY CHAIR CHIPPENDALE

PLATE XCIX.

MAHOGANY FRET-WORKED SETTEE, CHIPPENDALE (THE COVER IS MODERN)

1

2

PLATE C.

1—FOUR-BAR-BACKED CHIPPENDALE CHAIR

2—WHEEL-BACKED CHAIR CHIPPENDALE

1

2

PLATE CI.

1—HALL TABLE, OAK CHIPPENDALE

2—SIDE TABLE IN THE GOTHIC STYLE CHIPPENDALE

1

2

PLATE CII.

1—SETTEE, MAHOGANY, CHIPPENDALE

2— ,, ,, ,,

1

2

3

PLATE CIII.

1—TABLE, WALNUT 1750 CIRCA EMBROIDERY 1700 CIRCA

2—TABLE, MAHOGANY 1760 CIRCA

3—POLE SCREEN, MAHOGANY 1750 EMBROIDERY EARLIER

PLATE CIV.

1—WHATNOT, MAHOGANY CHIPPENDALE

2—WASHING STAND

1

2

PLATE CV.

1—MAHOGANY SLAB TABLE

2— ,, OCCASIONAL TABLE

PLATE CVI.

SIDEBOARD TABLE, MAHOGANY CHIPPENDALE

PLATE CVII.

MAHOGANY "COMMODE TABLE" WITH GILT MOULDINGS CHIPPENDALE

PLATE CVIII.

MAHOGANY CLOTHES PRESS

PLATE CIX.

1 AND 2—CHIPPENDALE TALLBOYS, MAHOGANY

3—HEPPELWHITE TALLBOY ,,

PLATE CX.

BREAKFAST TABLE, MAHOGANY CHIPPENDALE

1

2

PLATE CXI.

1—FRETWORKED CLUSTER-LEG TABLE MAHOGANY CHIPPENDALE

2—CLUSTER-LEG TABLE, MAHOGANY CHIPPENDALE

PLATE CXII.

MAHOGANY CABINET IN THE CHINESE STYLE

PLATE CXIII.

FRET PATTERN TABLE AND CHAIR, MAHOGANY CHIPPENDALE

PLATE CXIV.

CHIPPENDALE BEDSTEAD

1

2

3

4

PLATE CXV.

1—MIRROR, WOOD, PAINTED WHITE

2— ,, PINE FRAME ,, ,, CHIPPENDALE

3—CHIPPENDALE MIRROR AND GILT

4— ,, ,, ,,

PLATE CXVI.

CHIPPENDALE STYLE, MAHOGANY CLOCKS

PLATE CXVII.

SIDEBOARD TABLE, MAHOGANY 1780 CIRCA.

PLATE CXVIII.

MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD TABLE ADAM

1 AND 3

2

1 AND 3

PLATE CXIX.

1 AND 3—PEDESTAL AND URNS ADAM

2—SIDEBOARD TABLE, MAHOGANY ADAM

1

2

PLATE CXX.

1—CARD TABLE, MAHOGANY

PLATE CXXI.

LYRE-BACKED CHAIR, MAHOGANY

1 2 3

PLATE CXXII.

1—ARMCHAIR, MAHOGANY ADAM ABOUT 1780

2—ARMCHAIR, ADAM 1780 CIRCA.

PLATE CXXIII.

SIDEBOARD, MAHOGANY, INLAID

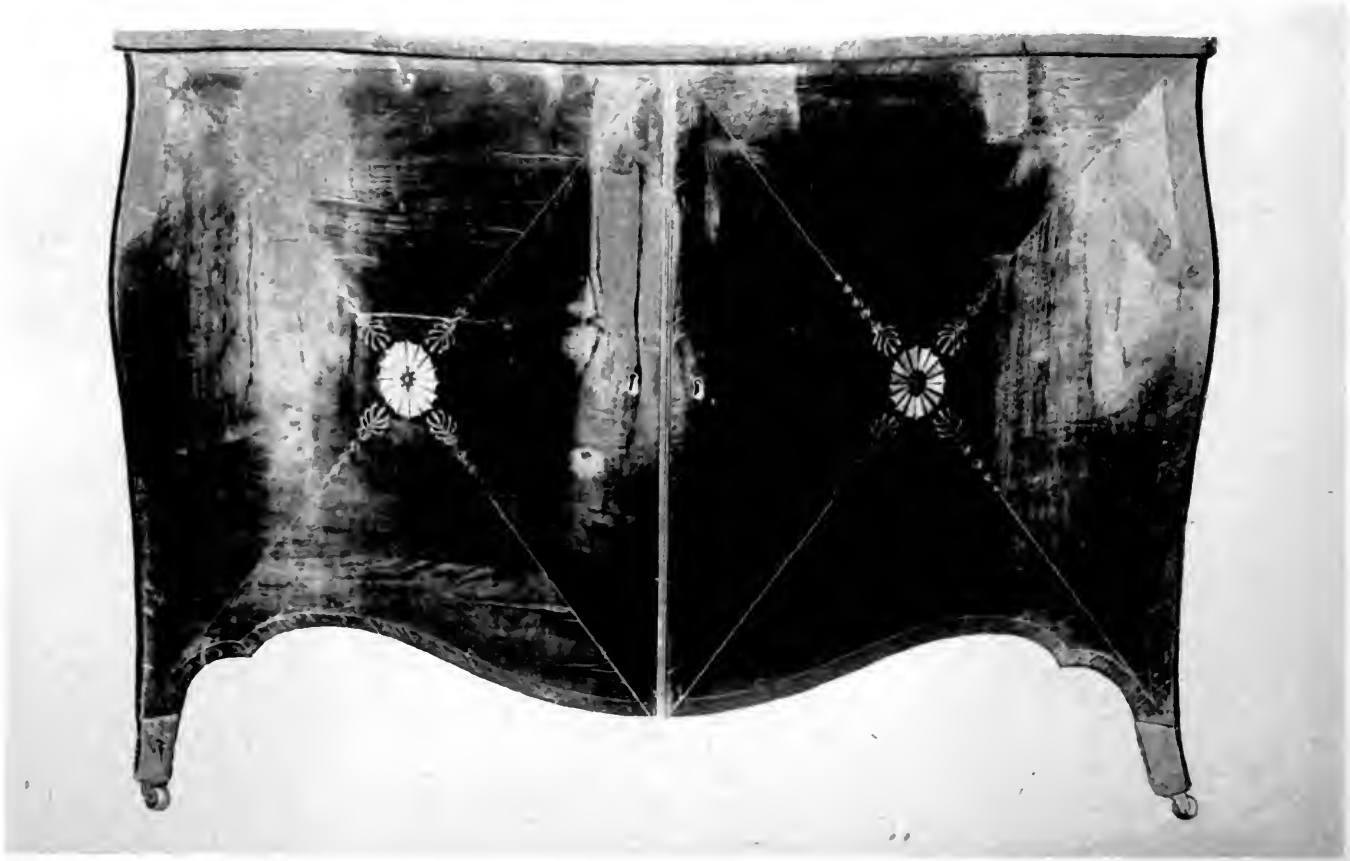


PLATE CXXIV.

COMMODE, MAHOGANY VENEERED AND INLAID

PLATE CXXV.

CHEST OF DRAWERS AND TOILET GLASS, HEPPELWHITE, MAHOGANY

PLATE CXXVI.

TABLE, PAINTED AND GILT

PLATE CXXVII.

CARD TABLE, WALNUT, INLAID TOP ABOUT 1780

PLATE CXXVIII.

BOOK CASE, MAHOGANY

PLATE CXXIX.

KNIFE-CASE, ONE OF A PAIR, INLAID WITH VARIOUS COLOURED WOODS HEPPLEWHITE

1 2 3

PLATE CXXX.

1—SHIELD-BACK CHAIR, MAHOGANY

2—CHAIR, MAHOGANY HEPPLEWHITE

PLATE CXXXI.

1—SHIELD-BACK ARM-CHAIR, MAHOGANY HEPPLEWHITE

2— ,, ,, ,, ,,

PLATE CXXXII.

1—SHIELD-BACK ARM-CHAIR, WALNUT HEPPLEWHITE

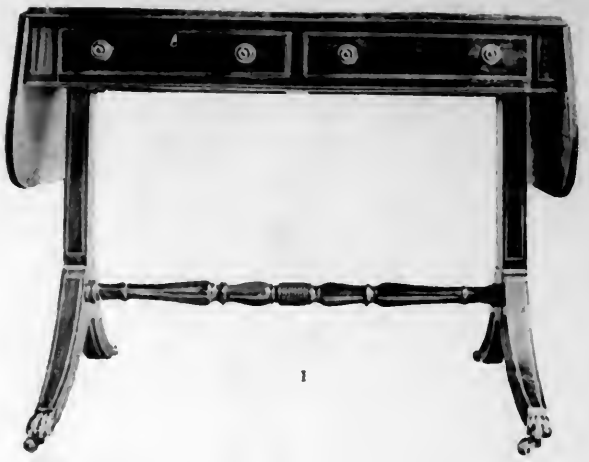
1

2

PLATE CXXXIII.

1—CHEST CABINET, SATINWOOD VENEER SHERATON AND TEA TRAY, MAHOGANY INLAID

2—WORKBOX, SATINWOOD, WITH MAHOGANY TOP INLAID SHERATON AND WORK TABLE, SATINWOOD, INLAID WITH EBONY SHERATON



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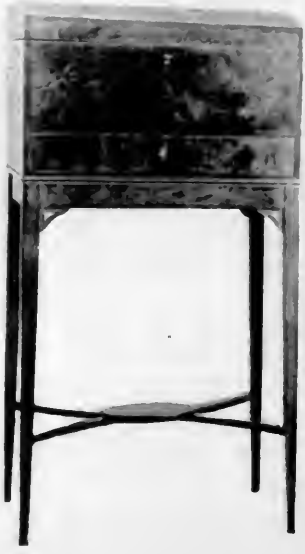


2

3

PLATE CXXXIV.

1—PEMBROKE TABLE, MAHOGANY INLAID LATE SHERATON

2—WORK-BOX ON STAND SATINWOOD VENEERED AND INLAID SHERATON

3—TABLE, MAHOGANY, BORDERED WITH SATINWOOD SHERATON

1 2 3

PLATE CXXXV.

1—WORK-TABLE, SATINWOOD, PAINTED WITH BLACK STRIPES SHERATON

2—TRIPOD READING TABLE, MAHOGANY LATE SHERATON

3—TABLE, WALNUT INLAID LATE SHERATON

1

2

PLATE CXXXVI.

1—LYRE-BACK ARM-CHAIR, MAHOGANY SHERATON

PLATE CXXXVII.

1—ARM-CHAIR OF BEECH

2—ARM-CHAIR, PAINTED AND GILT

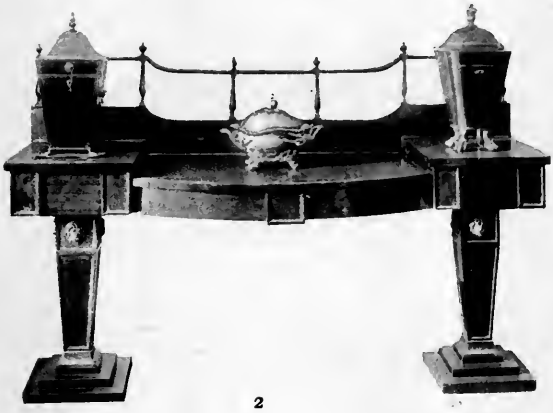
3— ,, ,, OF BEECH, PAINTED AND GILT SHERATON

4— ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,

PLATE CXXXVIII.

ARM-CHAIR, SATINWOOD, PAINTED SHERATON

1



2

3

PLATE CXXXIX.

1—SIDEBOARD, MAHOGANY INLAID SHERATON

2— ,, ,, ,, LATE SHERATON

3— ,, ,, ,, SHERATON, MIDDLE PERIOD

PLATE CXL.

SIDEBOARD, MAHOGANY INLAID SHERATON

PLATE CXLI.

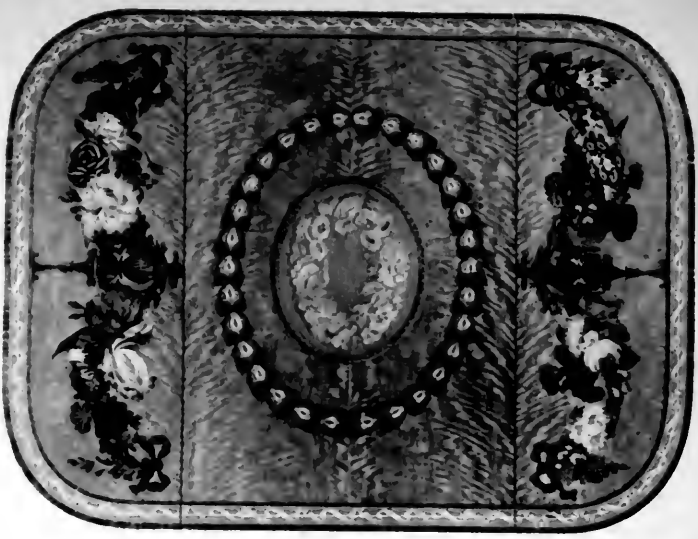
CARD TABLE, SATINWOOD, INLAID SHERATON

PLATE CXLII.

TABLE, SATINWOOD INLAID SHERATON

PLATE CXLIII.

CARD TABLE, ROSEWOOD INLAID



1

2

PLATE CXLIV.

1—TOP OF TABLE, SATINWOOD PAINTED SHERATON

2—THE TABLE ENTIRE

PLATE CXLV.

DRESSING TABLE, SATINWOOD, PAINTED SHERATON

PLATE CXLVI.

CABINET, WITH ITS TOP, SATIN WOOD, INLAID AND PAINTED
SHERATON LATE 18TH CENTURY

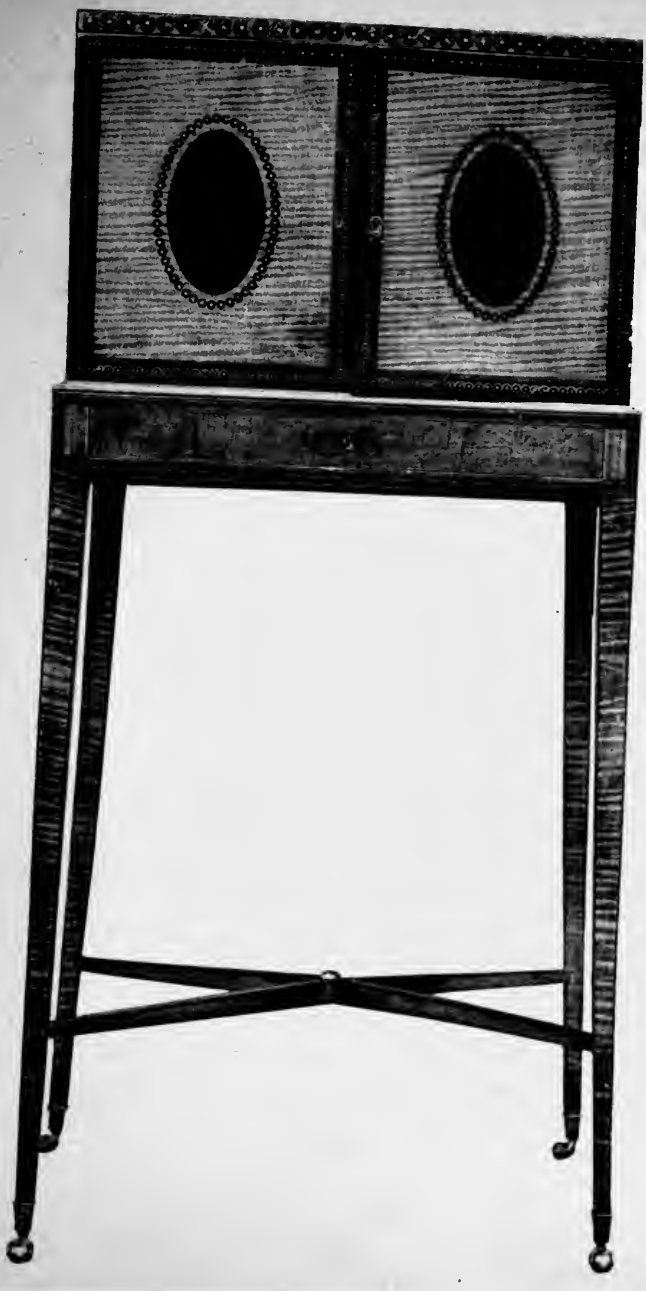


PLATE CXLVII.

CABINET, CEDAR VENEERED WITH SATIN WOOD AND INLAID SHERATON

PLATE CXLVIII.

COMMODE, ONE OF A PAIR, SATINWOOD VENEER, INLAID SHERATON

PLATE CXLIX.

CABINET, SATINWOOD, INLAID, WITH ORMOLU MOUNTS SHERATON

PLATE CL.

BOOK-CASE, SATIN WOOD MOUNTED WITH ORMOLU AND WEDGWOOD MEDALLIONS

PLATE CLI.

BUREAU BOOKCASE, MAHOGANY INLAID SHERATON
LATE 18TH CENTURY

PLATE CLII.

BUREAU BOOKCASE, SATINWOOD SHERATON

1 2 3

PLATE CLIII.

1—TOILET TABLE, SATINWOOD INLAID WITH WALNUT SHERATON
2—CABINET WASHSTAND, MAHOGANY SHERATON
3—CABINET TOILET STAND, MAHOGANY SHERATON

PLATE CLIV.

1—CABINET, SATIN WOOD, INLAID AND PAINTED SHERATON

2—WRITING TABLE, INLAID WITH EBONY SHERATON

PLATE CLV.

MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD CLOCK

PLATE CLVI.

CABINET, PRINCIPALLY PEAR-TREE INLAID LATE 15TH CENTURY ·

PLATE CLVII.

CABINET, SATINWOOD, VENEERED, WITH PAINTINGS

PLATE CLVIII

1—ARM-CHAIR, ROSEWOOD 1800 CIRCA

2—HALL CHAIR, MAHOGANY ,, ,,

3 AND 4—LATE SHERATON CHAIRS, MAHOGANY, INLAID WITH BRASS

PLATE CLIX.

1—CLOCK AND

2—WARDROBE, LACQUERED IN JAPANESE STYLE, LATE 18TH CENTURY

1

2

PLATE CLX.

1—WINDSOR CHAIR, YEW, GOTHIC STYLE

2—CHAIR, WOOD, PAINTED GREEN 18TH CENTURY

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